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The Atlantic Monthly

DECEMBER 1994

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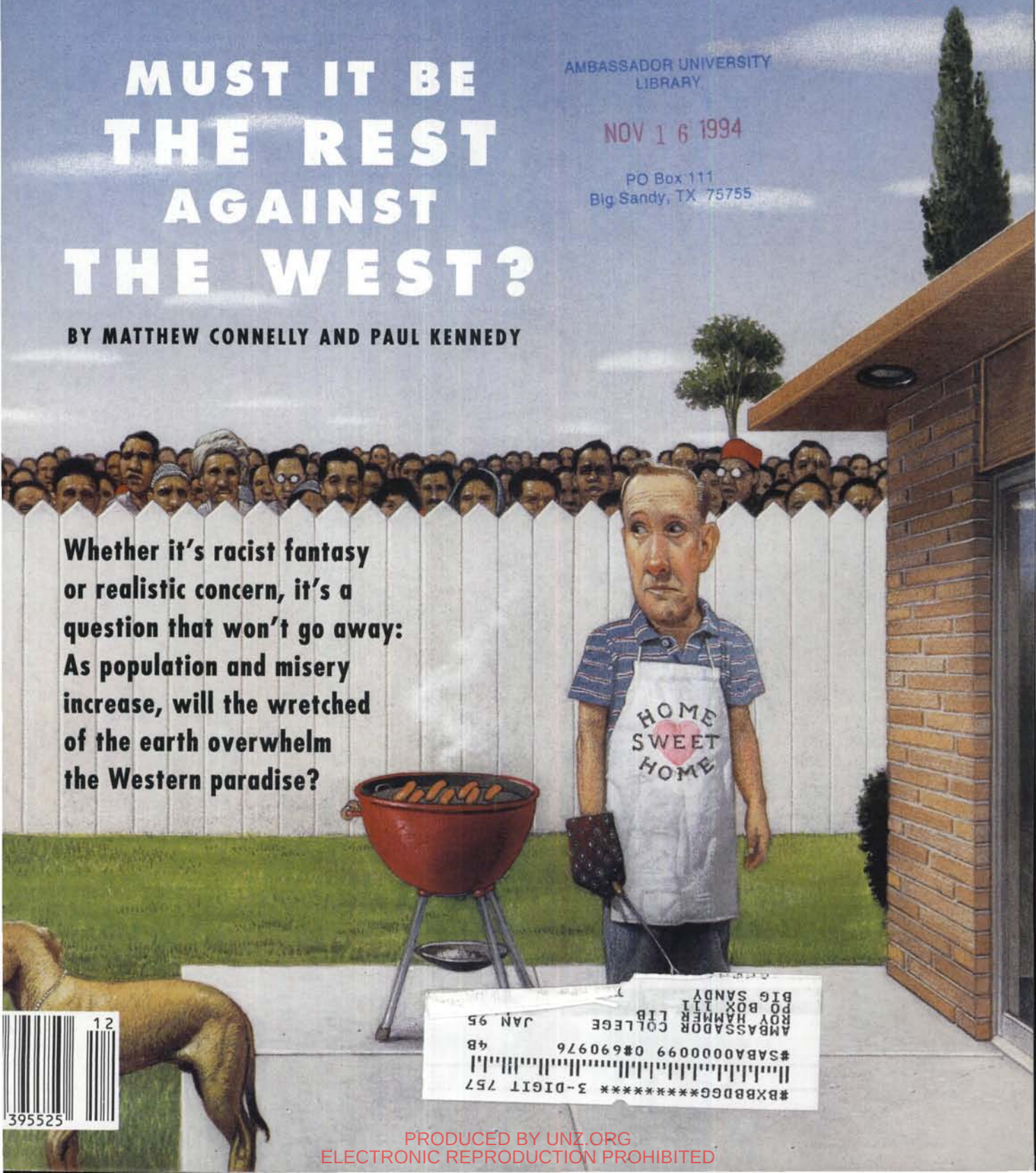
MUST IT BE THE REST AGAINST THE WEST?

BY MATTHEW CONNELLY AND PAUL KENNEDY

Whether it's racist fantasy or realistic concern, it's a question that won't go away: As population and misery increase, will the wretched of the earth overwhelm the Western paradise?



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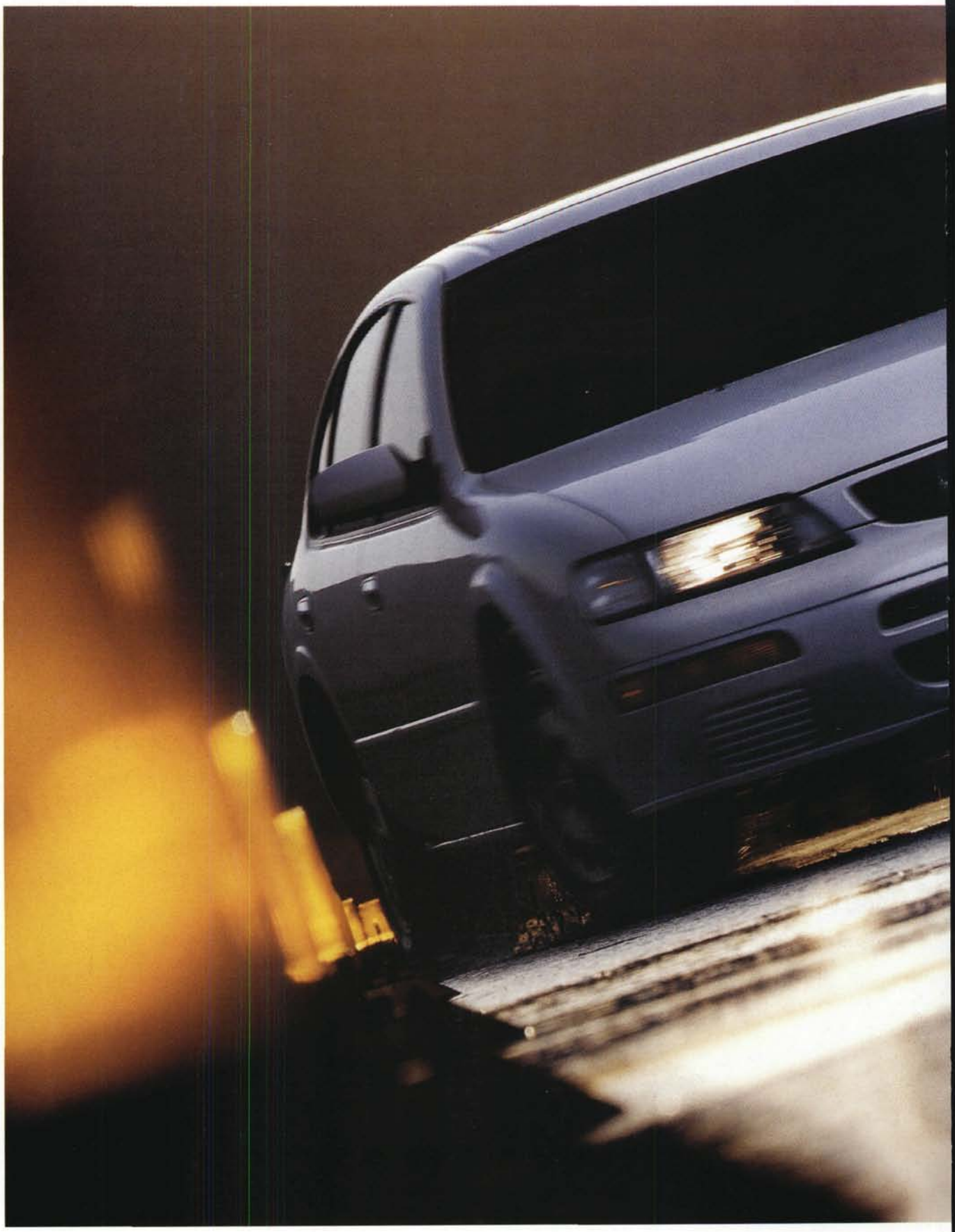

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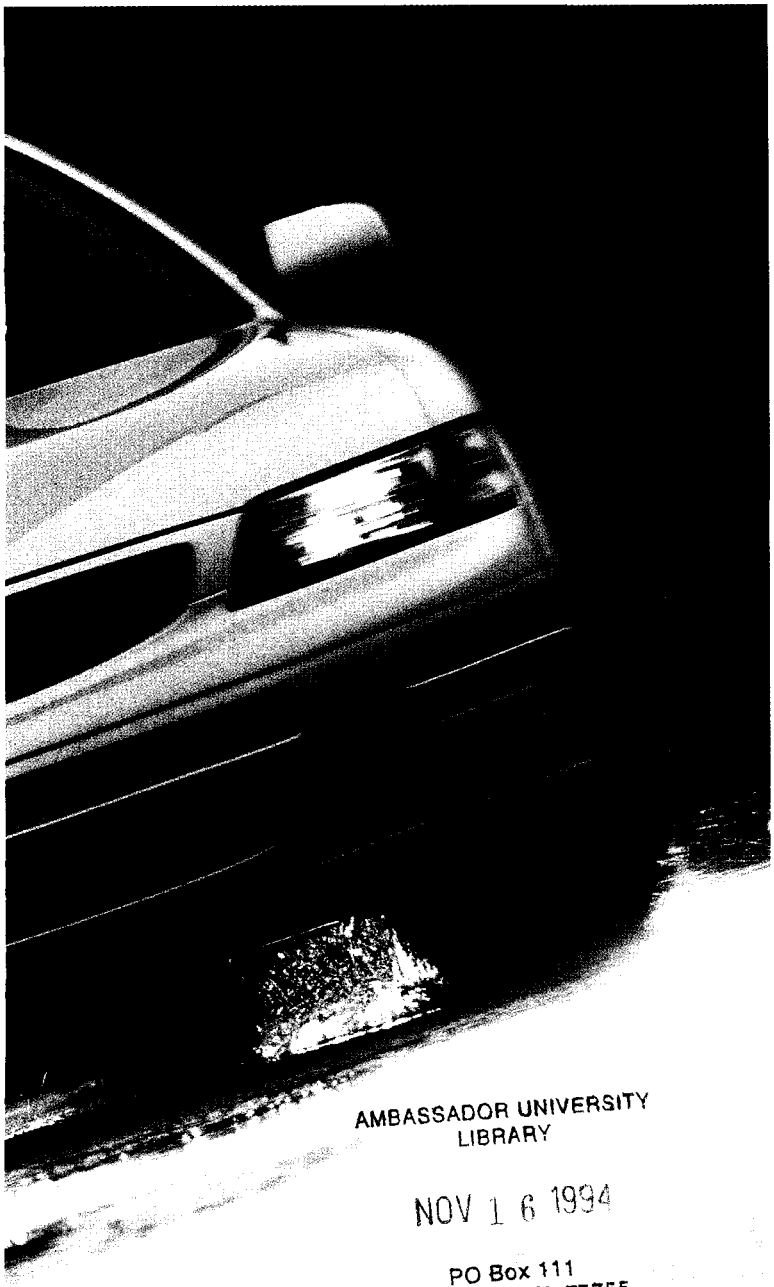

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List of boxes of stuff in storage
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Letter to Jeffrey T. Leeds, my financial advisor

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The Atlantic Monthly (ISSN 0276-9077) is published monthly by The Atlantic Monthly Company, 745 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116 (617-536-9500). Second-class postage paid at Boston, MA, Toronto, Ont., and additional mailing offices. Printed in U.S.A. Advertising and Circulation: 1290 Avenue of the Americas, N.Y, N.Y. 10104 (212-830-1900). Subscriptions: $17.94 for one year, $29.95 for two years, $39.95 for three years in the United States and its possessions; $8.00 additional a year in Canada, includes GST (123209926); $12.00 additional a year elsewhere. Subscription queries: Atlantic Subscription Processing Center, Box 52661, Boulder, CO 80322. Or call 800-234-2411. Back issues: send $5.00 per copy to The Atlantic, Back Issues, 200 North 12th St., Newark, NJ 07107. Vol. 274, No. 6, December 1994. Copyright © 1994, by The Atlantic Monthly Company. All rights reserved. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Atlantic, Box 52661, Boulder, CO 80322.

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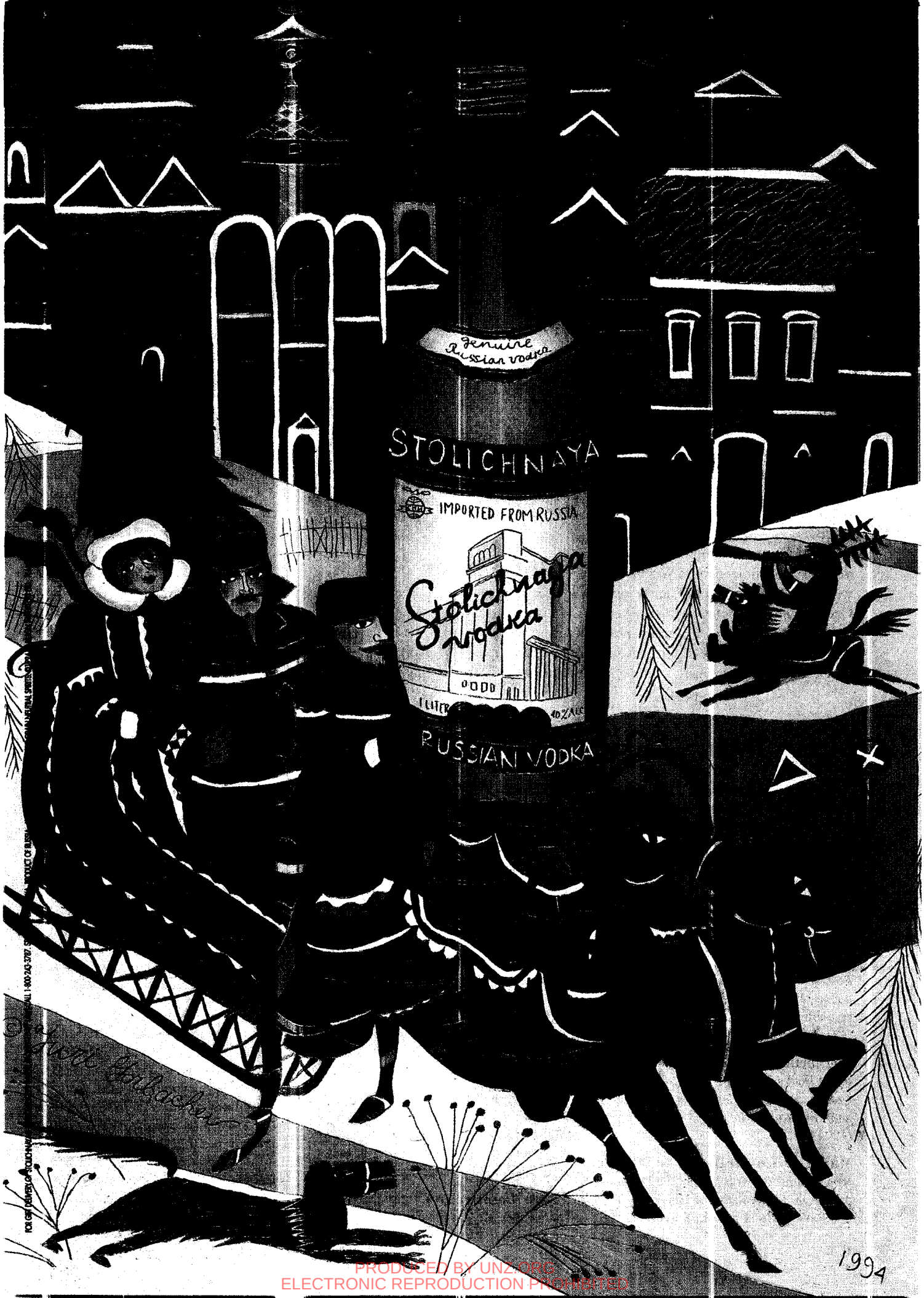

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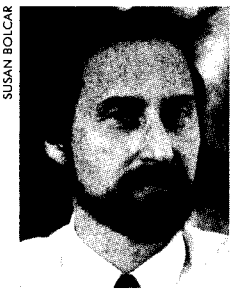
745 BOYLSTON STREET

WORDS are this magazine's stock-in-trade, valued not only for what they can say but also for what they are and where they come from. This month we inaugurate the first of two new language columns: Word Improvisation, which will appear every third month on the magazine's final page. Written by the lexicographer J. E. Lighter, the first volume of whose *Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang* was published last spring, the column will focus on the origins and evolution of slang words and terms. Lighter's dictionary, with more than 20,000 definitions covering *A* to *G*, has received wide acclaim. It is, says John Simpson, the editor in chief of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "a landmark publication, at one stroke sweeping its predecessors into the shade."


SUSAN BOLCAR

MARTIN CORNEL

J. E. Lighter and Barbara Wallraff

The second new column, which will make its debut in January, is Word Court, written by Barbara Wallraff, an *Atlantic Monthly* senior editor. One of Wallraff's duties at this magazine is to scan every sentence we publish in order to ensure proper usage and consistent style. As a consequence of a recent stint as "MsGrammar" on the electronic service America Online, Wallraff realized that the issues of grammar and usage on which Americans disagree—and wish for guidance—are nearly boundless. Wallraff's brief in Word Court is to adjudicate disputes that readers bring to our attention. She can be reached by mail, of course, as well as through America Online.

The two new columns will join Word Watch, which continues to be written by Anne H. Soukhanov, the executive editor of the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition.* A book by Soukhanov based on the Word Watch column will be published next year by Henry Holt. Word Histories, which has alternated with Word Watch on the back page, and will be suspended, has also resulted in a book: *A History of English in Its Own Words*. The author of the column and the book, Craig M. Carver, is an editor of *The Dictionary of American Regional English.*

Samuel Johnson once complained that whereas most kinds of authors can hope to win praise, the lexicographer can hope at best to "avoid reproach." It is a measure of its spell that the work of words draws talented people nonetheless. We are fortunate to have some of the very best. —THE EDITORS

CONTRIBUTORS

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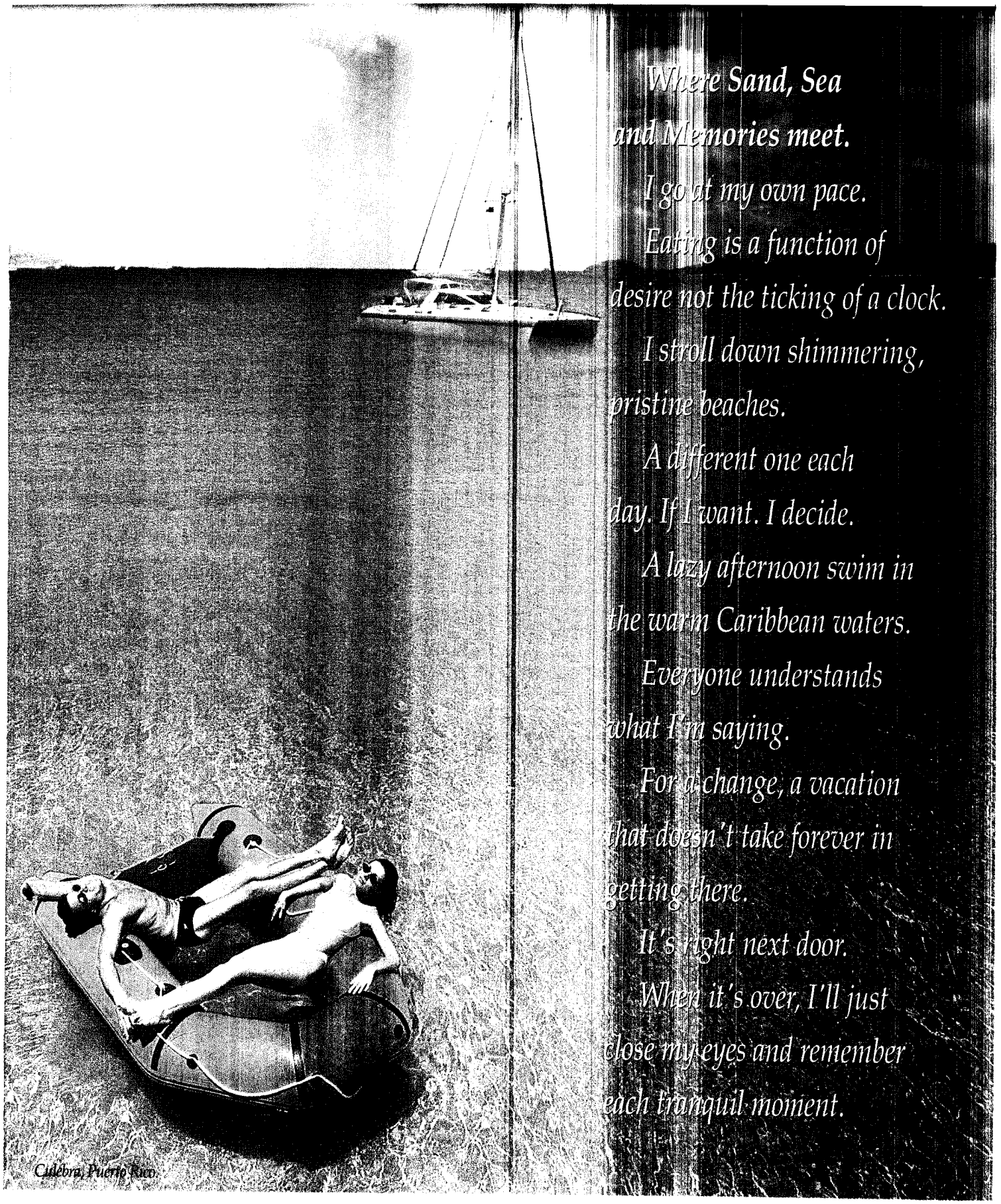

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LETTERS

Becoming Us

I enjoyed Winifred Gallagher's piece "How We Become What We Are" (September *Atlantic*). According to the author, about 15 percent of children are "inhibited"—that is, they are reflective and approach each new situation as if it were a threat. About 30 percent are uninhibited—"bold," energetic, and spontaneous.

Although it is not politically correct to speculate on such matters, I would guess that those percentages vary among ethnic and racial groups. If those percentages were roughly reversed among the Chinese and the Japanese, that fact could explain why there was a British Empire but not a comparable Japanese empire. It could also explain why the Indo-Europeans and not the initially more advanced Chinese set out on the voyages that began the Age of Discovery. Such differences might also explain why Caucasians have generally preferred aggressive, proselytizing religions, such as Christianity and Islam, while Asians seem to prefer contemplative religions.

One historical consequence of variations among European groups may have been the rise and fall of the Vikings. It is possible that a thousand years ago Scandinavians had a larger percentage of bold personalities than they do now. Many of those bold individuals (the Vikings) went off exploring and to war. As a consequence, a large number of bold individuals died (or were absorbed into other populations) while the inhibited ones stayed behind and perpetuated their genes. Viking raids died out, and Scandinavians became more peaceful.

William A. Schroeder
Carbondale, Ill.

I thank Winifred Gallagher for her apt characterization of my views regarding medication and temperament in *Listening to Prozac*. In response to one of the researchers she interviewed, I would argue that the proposition that antidepressants affect temperament is merely untested, and not at all "ridiculous." Diverse lines of evidence suggest that healthy people may respond to these drugs.

- The brain systems and brain chemicals thought to underlie disorders of mood are the same ones believed to influence temperament—and these are the very systems that antidepressants alter.
- Studies of both normal and minimally traumatized lower primates show antidepressants' effects on "personality," including changes in the animals' response to stress or novelty and changes in their level of assertiveness or aggression—the traits implicated in temperamental variation in humans.
- Few psychoactive substances affect only the disturbed. One need not have panic disorder to feel calmer on Xanax; many people, not only those with attention deficits, become more focused on stimulants; that alcohol makes you less inhibited is hardly a sign that you have a social phobia. Antidepressants may be different—they may recalibrate an emotional thermostat. But such recalibration is the essence of temperamental change, and if the drugs do work this way, their influence is hardly likely to be limited to the mentally ill.
- With increasing frequency, depressed, anxious, or obsessional patients treated with antidepressants recount changes in long-standing personality traits that preceded any mood disorder. These reports are by definition anecdotal, but so frequent is this outcome that some psychiatrists consider a patient to have had an incomplete response to an antidepressant if, on recovery from an acute episode of depression, the patient has not experienced an alteration in what would in other eras have been called his or her melancholic temperament.

Perhaps half a dozen responsible research groups are interested in studying the effects of antidepressants on normal personality—the issue is very much in the scientific mainstream, but because it

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does not involve pathology, the research is hard to fund. Evaluation of the influence of antidepressants on temperament has been clouded by the prominent side effects of the older drugs in the class. The few—small, poorly controlled—studies that we have on the topic tend to show that antidepressants *can* alter mood in people without mental illness. The (unproved) assertion that only people whose "arousal systems" are "perturbed" respond to Prozac hardly answers the issue. As Gallagher shows, to be chronically "reactive," and thus inhibited or risk-averse or melancholic, is one way to be normal; if medications affect that sort of perturbation, then they do affect normal temperament and personality.

Peter D. Kramer
Providence, R.I.

Winifred Gallagher replies:

Whether Prozac and other new psychiatric drugs not only treat illness but also change personality—perhaps even a healthy personality—is a hotly debated issue in psychiatry. Peter Kramer argues that because antidepressants alter patients' characteristic emotional states, which are the cornerstone of temperament (personality's biological, heritable component), they alter personality. But personality also has a learned, experiential element, traditionally called character. The personality theorist Michael Stone observed at the 1994 meeting of the American Psychiatric Association, "The depressed, pessimistic, dishonest, penny-pinching, ingratiating, egotistical patient, after enough listening to Prozac, becomes a euthymic, less pessimistic, dishonest, penny-pinching, ingratiating, egotistical patient."

Someone who has long been stifled by depression may feel and seem "like a different person" after treatment, but that difference revolves around relief from mood-related symptoms. So far there are no pills for selfishness, antisociality, vapidity, avarice, boorishness, or a host of other very real personality problems.

Reefer Madness

The articles on marijuana by Eric Schlosser in your August and September issues ("Reefer Madness" and "Marijuana and the Law") ignored arguments that marijuana is harmful and represents a danger for drivers and operators of heavy equipment.

Schlosser says that marijuana use among adolescents appears to have declined as a result of their awareness of its potential harm to health, not because they fear punishment. Adolescents tend to give little consideration to either their future health or present risks. But they do understand discipline. We need to identify more users of every age and to impose short-term punishments, including arrest, jail terms, and significant fines. This would deter users, and at the same time reduce the number of dealers and thus the number of people serving long prison sentences.

Nancy Starr
Erie, Pa.

Eric Schlosser has highlighted the most frightening aspect of mandatory-minimum sentences: the awesome power now vested in the U.S. attorneys who consider the exercise of compassion a sign of weakness. According to Deborah Daniels, the U.S. attorney in the Southern District of Indiana from 1988 to 1993, for the intent of Congress to be implemented, justice has to be sought without the exercise of discretion. As a result, Schlosser writes, "the policy of her office was to seek conviction on the most serious readily provable charge—in every case, without exception." Daniels's statement comes as no surprise to those of us who deal with attorneys like her on a regular basis.

But of course this policy is favored only when it is convenient for the U.S. attorney's office, and Daniels's behavior in the Mark Young case is a good example. Daniels did, in fact, exercise a significant amount of discretion when she offered Mark Young a reduced sentence for his cooperation—even when she knew that Young had little or no information of value to offer her. When he refused, she charged him in a manner that assured a life sentence.

Is it any wonder that defendants who have agreed to cooperate testify untruthfully to save themselves from such a draconian criminal-justice system? If Daniels really believes that "the pressure to cooperate has [not] diminished the quality of testimony in court," she is very naive. A more likely explanation is

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that for her, and for many other U.S. attorneys, the means have become the end.

Mark A. Kaplan
Burlington, Vt.

The question is not "How does a society come to punish a person more harshly for selling marijuana than for killing someone with a gun?" The question is "What happens to a society that equates robbery, rape, and murder with selling someone a safe, nontoxic vegetable?"

Our laws are a codification of our values, and our laws say this: if O. J. Simpson sells marijuana, then, just like Mark Young, he should receive mandatory life, without possibility of parole. But if all he does is commit murder, and no drugs are involved, then his crime is not so bad. Five or ten years will be enough.

These laws are morally bankrupt.

Peter Wilson
Phoenix, Ariz.

Your recent articles on marijuana laws say more about the hopelessly dysfunctional nature of our criminal-justice system than about the irrationality of marijuana laws and enforcement patterns. Having interned as a law student in the offices of both a county public defender and a prosecutor, and having served as counsel to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, I have seen up close the demonic spirit that possesses our courts at work.

"Justice"—whether in its philosophical or in its theological sense—has virtually nothing to do with the criminal process in our country. Rather, the system rewards *winning*, pure and simple. Defenders try to get people off, regardless of their antisocial behavior and future destructive potential. Prosecutors try to maximize sentences, regardless of the violence done to families and the expense to society. Judges, political appointees thoroughly familiar with the reality of the process, play referee. Members of Congress and state legislators, engaged in their own endless cycles of winning and losing, take the cynical and irrational stand that garners votes. The absurd posturing from both sides on the so-called "crime bill" in this past session is perhaps the nadir of such cynicism.

Wes Howard-Brook
Seattle, Wash.

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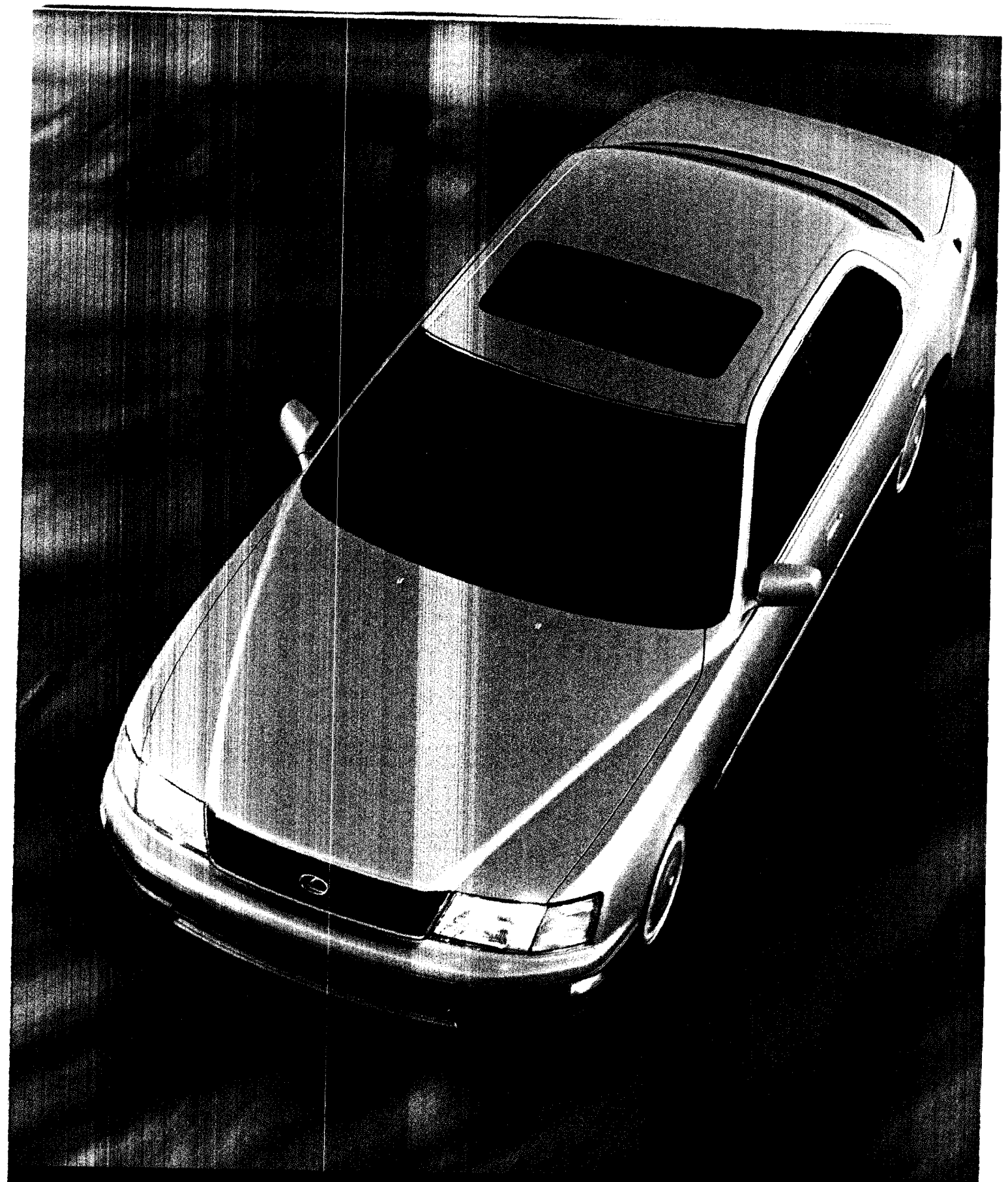

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Your coverage of alternative views and iconoclastic positions is always interesting and usually thought-provoking. However, Eric Schlosser's feature on maximum drug-related sentencing was hardly up to the standard I expect. I take exception on a few major points.

One is the notion that because we have 300,000 people in prison for drug-related crimes, we have too many criminals. Actually, a smaller percentage of our total population is in prison than before. We just stopped building prisons to keep up. The numbers sound large, but with a population closing in on 300 million, we can neither stop building prisons nor tolerate the "wild west" criminal activity that might have slipped by in the past.

Schlosser's intent seemed to be to persuade readers that most of these 300,000 drug offenders were in for "selling a few pounds." But drug-related crimes are among the most pernicious and vicious, with innocent children often being in the crossfire of drug dealers fighting for schoolyard "turf." Ask the parents of the three young children murdered by warring drug dealers in Chicago last summer how they feel about men selling a few pounds of dope.

Mark Young was aware of the risk he took when he sold a few pounds. Why should he not be held responsible for his actions?

David Schlesinger
Chandler, Ariz.

Eric Schlosser replies:

There is little evidence that sending young people to jail deters marijuana use. Several studies have failed to find a correlation between the strictness of a state's marijuana laws and its rate of marijuana use. Holland decriminalized marijuana in 1976, and marijuana use among Dutch seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds *declined* by 40 percent over the next decade. Underlying cultural forces, not laws, play the greatest role in the rise and fall of drug epidemics. Nancy Starr is correct in noting that accidents are one of the real dangers posed by marijuana.

David Schlesinger, however, is quite wrong about the rate of incarceration a century ago. In 1880 there were approximately 30,000 people in American prisons and reformatories, for an incarceration rate of about sixty-one prisoners per 100,000 in the general population. The U.S. incarceration rate climbed to about 100 per 100,000 in 1920 and remained at that level for the next fifty years. Today there are roughly 948,000 men and women in American prisons. Our incarceration rate has now reached about 350 per 100,000 (almost six times as high as that of a century ago). While the number of drug offenders being sent to state prisons rose by 1,100 percent from 1980 to 1992, the number of violent offenders who were being imprisoned increased by only 50 percent.

Marijuana offenders are not often found exchanging gunfire over schoolyard turf. In 1992, of the marijuana felons sent to federal prison 58 percent had no relevant criminal history at the time of sentencing; 91 percent were not considered organizers, leaders, managers, or supervisors of any drug organizations; and 92 percent did not own a firearm at the time of their arrest.

Mark Young has accepted full responsibility for his crimes, but considers the punishment administered by the government to be excessive. The U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals recently agreed with Young, nullifying his mandatory life sentence and returning his case to Judge Sarah Evans Barker. The appeals court ruled that Young should have been sentenced only for the pounds of marijuana that he brokered, not for the thousands of marijuana plants grown by Ernest Montgomery and Claude Atkinson. Judge Barker may give him a new sentence of anywhere from ten years to life. The U.S. Sentencing Guidelines recommend about eleven years, without the possibility of parole.

End of the Book

D. T. Max's "The End of the Book?" (September *Atlantic*) was a welcome antidote to the breathless (and often brainless) "visionary" activity in the software and publishing industries over multimedia. It is generally agreed that the book's functionality has yet to be surpassed by any electronic renditions, except when the computer's powerful searching abilities come into play—in reference works like the *Oxford English Dictionary*, for instance.

But welcome and necessary as Max's skepticism is, it is flawed by an unfortunate technological naiveté. For example, it is naive to assume, in the age of waterproof cassette and CD players, that it will be impossible (or even difficult) to make a beach-ready electronic reading device. It is also naive to confuse information with the software used to access that information, as Max does when describing the obsolescence of early multimedia titles. The World Wide Web, a net-based hypertext medium, consists of multimedia "pages" that are readable on a variety of systems, new and old. The Hypertext Markup Language used to create these pages is not system-specific and is therefore immune to obsolescence. This is just smart programming; examples like Swigart's Portal are the exception, not the rule. Information will be kept accessible if it is needed. In ten years I will have no use for the programs on my present computer, but I am confident that documents created using those programs—this letter, for instance—will be at my fingertips in 2004.

The complexity of multimedia's component elements (text, sound, still and moving images) is not increasing, but the sophistication of the methods used for storing and accessing them is. This, one hopes, will mean a future of more organized, accessible, and usable bodies of information, not a techno-Babel.

Paul Bissex
Northampton, Mass.

D. T. Max on electronic publishing has got it all pretty much right. I make a few additional points in my own discussions. One is that, by weight, books make up half of all my worldly possessions, and *this is just ridiculous. It becomes a limi*tation on my life: I hesitate to change my residence because I don't want to deal with all the books. I can't find books I know I have, or people take them and don't tell me. On vacations I find I didn't bring the book I wanted, so I buy another copy—but now I have my handwritten notes partly in one book at home, and partly in my vacation book, so I must keep them both, or collate the notes . . . What this means is that the prospect of transforming books into some portable electronic form is very attractive to me, and may become more so in the future.

I am one of those people who can't

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read without a pen in hand. I am an active writer-in-the-margins, and a book's index (which is usually awful anyway) is utterly useless if you are trying to find your notes. You have to thumb through and look. But of course in an electronic book you can search your notes. (You can also read them, since they are always legible—no small virtue.)

I believe that just as electronic media will allow more illustrations to be added inexpensively (or sound, or whatever), they will allow for more-rigorous citations. In fact, I foresee the day when a scholar may be expected to document every line of a text, the way a programmer documents every line of code. It sounds like a joke, but why not? There won't be a forbidding printing cost, and collation will be mechanized. In any case, I would expect precision and frequency of citation to increase in electronic media (that is, if we ever decide we are done with postmodernism).

Yes, screens are disagreeable, but response to screens, like so much else in life, is a function of quality. As active-matrix screens get better, objections to them decline. And as people start liking hypertext, and start liking lots of illustrations, they may begin to deal with screens whether they like screens per se or not. Certain subjects beg for multimedia and hypertext. I immediately think of art history and neuroanatomy.

We are so accustomed to the inherent limitations of books that we do not hear the voice inside ourselves when we wish for more—when we read a text description and think, "I wish I could see this painting he is talking about" or "I wish I could see a diagram of this arrangement" or "I wish I could hear the bird call he is describing." Now that such wishes are almost attainable, I have become more attentive to how often I wish for something a book cannot easily provide.

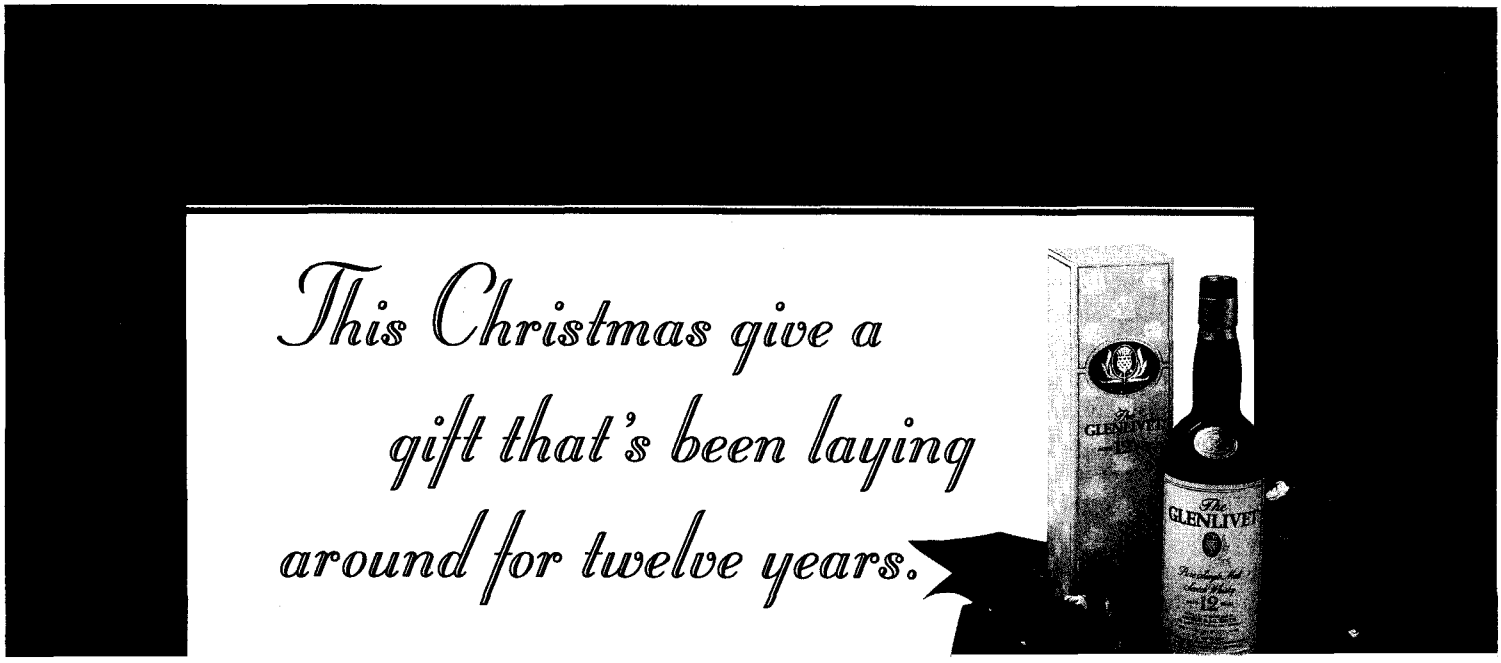
And I especially want electronic searches. It is a continuous irony that as I am working on a novel, I can find any passage in it instantly with a keystroke, but at the same time I have heaps of books on my desk, on the floor, on the tables, and I must rummage through them like a rat looking for cheese to find some quote or note there. To me, these living experiences, these daily irritations, are a more powerful indicator of my future wants than any abstract discussion of the virtues of electronic publishing.

Michael Crichton
Santa Monica, Calif.

The superiority of the printed page over the computer screen is obvious. The page changes. It uses subtractive color, which means it relies on the light in the room to give it its character. It bends and tilts and moves nearer and farther from the eye. When one is reading a book, the old primate, mammal, and reptile portions of the brain participate in holding the book, scanning the curve of the page, and deciphering the shadows.

The screen, on the other hand, relies on additive color. It provides its own light. It's hard and flat and unchanging. It's best read in a room from a static posture. Only the newer, *Homo sapiens* portion of the brain is fully engaged when reading a computer screen.

A computer screen may seem more alive, more active, because it provides its own light. But a light source becomes



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monotonous after a while. It's the things that are illuminated that are interesting.

Terry Gomes
San Francisco, Calif.

As someone who was involved with pioneering adaptations of two new technologies, stereophonic sound and fiber optics, I squirmed with fascination and delight when I read the sensitive cynicism and romantic nostalgia of D. T. Max's critique of multimedia in the September issue.

Only one point bothered me enough to write this letter: the belief that "interactive" digital highways, roads, and culs-de-sac will foster a heightened sense of democracy. This is an illusion generated by highly intelligent people who are in love with their creations. Any nation with a high school dropout rate of about 25 percent and practical illiteracy of 38 percent isn't going to jump at the chance to initiate or respond to communications through computer and modem. Equally important is the fact that true dialogue is as rare as a reasoned approach to matrimony, family planning, or the U.S. policy on Bosnia.

These truths seem self-evident when one examines the nature of most communications. They are one-way. These include everything from road signs and traffic signals to work orders and requests for the salt during dinner. Most of our recreation involves one-way messages: watching television, attending a movie or a ball game, or reading does not involve real interaction between the actors, players, or writers and the audience. Although we may react to the events on the screen or the field or the page, our response is largely confined to a few grunts or knee-jerks; nothing we do, including rage and riot, ever affects the program, the game, or the writer's point of view.

True dialogue can exist only when both sides are equally informed, take care to abide by something akin to parliamentary rules of order, and show respect for the other side's opinions. You can't find that situation by channel cruising—Rush Limbaugh, take note—or reading the *Wall Street Journal* editorials. Probably the closest most of us ever get to formal dialogue is watching *Court TV*.

Nathaniel Gilbert
Westport, Conn.

Sex Bias in Medicine

We read with amazement and dismay Dr. Andrew Kadar's article "The Sex-Bias Myth in Medicine" (August *Atlantic*). His reality and that of most women could not be more divergent. Kadar's basic assertion is that "women receive more care than men, sometimes receive better care than men, and benefit more than men do from some developing technologies." Though some of his arguments are accurate, Kadar oversimplifies and overgeneralizes the facts about health-care services and research.

Women's-health advocates are well aware that more women than men use the health-care system. This does not mean they receive *better* care than men. Kadar himself notes this; yet his proof is a study in which women were said to have "*more* diagnostic tests and treatment—*more* lab tests, blood-pressure checks, drug prescriptions, and return appointments" (emphasis ours). This finding does little to support his assertion that quantity does not equal quality. In reality, although women often receive more tests and treatment than men, many of these procedures have proved unnecessary. For example, women (and many men) are alarmed by the well-documented rates among women of unnecessary hysterectomies, prophylactic mastectomies, and use of mood-altering medications, to name a few. Perhaps not receiving referrals for coronary-bypass surgery, as the author describes, demonstrates one instance of better medical treatment for women, yet this does not prove that women receive better health care overall—nor is it the norm. For instance, Ayanian and Epstein (1991) have shown that, even when the same variables that Kadar relies on to reduce sex differences in treatment (that is, age or pre-existing conditions) were controlled for, women were denied access to necessary and appropriate cardiac-related procedures—including coronary angioplasty, angiography, and surgery—when admitted to the hospital for heart disease. As the health researcher Rosser (1994) observes, older women and lower-income women of color fare even worse than their white middle- or upper-income counterparts.

We also wonder whether Kadar is aware that until the Clinton Administration lifted the ban on testing RU 486, in 1993, men with prostate cancer were allowed to import this medication illegally to the United States, whereas women who tried to do the same for treatment of endometriosis or breast cancer (*not* as an abortive agent) were denied permission (the medication was confiscated from women). In fact, men with prostate cancer who were allowed to use RU 486 testified to the Senate that women should be allowed to use this medication for cancer treatment. Perhaps this example of sex bias in the use of developing technologies is not salient enough to be recognized by Kadar.

Kadar has not presented the entire picture of health research and its exclusion of women. Although he acknowledges that women have been excluded from many clinical trials, he minimizes the effects of extrapolating outcomes for all people from androcentric (male-centered) models. In other words, although there may be limited research funding for male-specific diseases, (white) male bodies and their health or illness indicators (for example, average heart size, blood pressure, and so forth) typically are overgeneralized as the standard for all people. There may be less research regarding men only, but since they are used to set the norms for health and illness, it is not clear that this translates into sex bias against men, as Kadar argues. More important, this androcentric bias has proved at best unhealthy and at worst deadly for women. For example, it is well documented that until 1992 the Centers for Disease Control had not developed a case definition that included gynecological conditions and other symptoms related to HIV and AIDS in women, in spite of their determination that by the year 2000 women will be the primary group affected by HIV and AIDS. Most people now recognize that the use of male-centered protocols has led to misdiagnosis of and failure to detect AIDS among women. This has had a disturbing outcome: a man's average remaining life after the diagnosis of AIDS is thirty months, a woman's fifteen weeks. Receiving more diagnostic tests or treatments that are based on male-normed clinical indicators does not translate into better care for women.

Jessica A. Jonikas
Lisa Razzano
Chicago, Ill.

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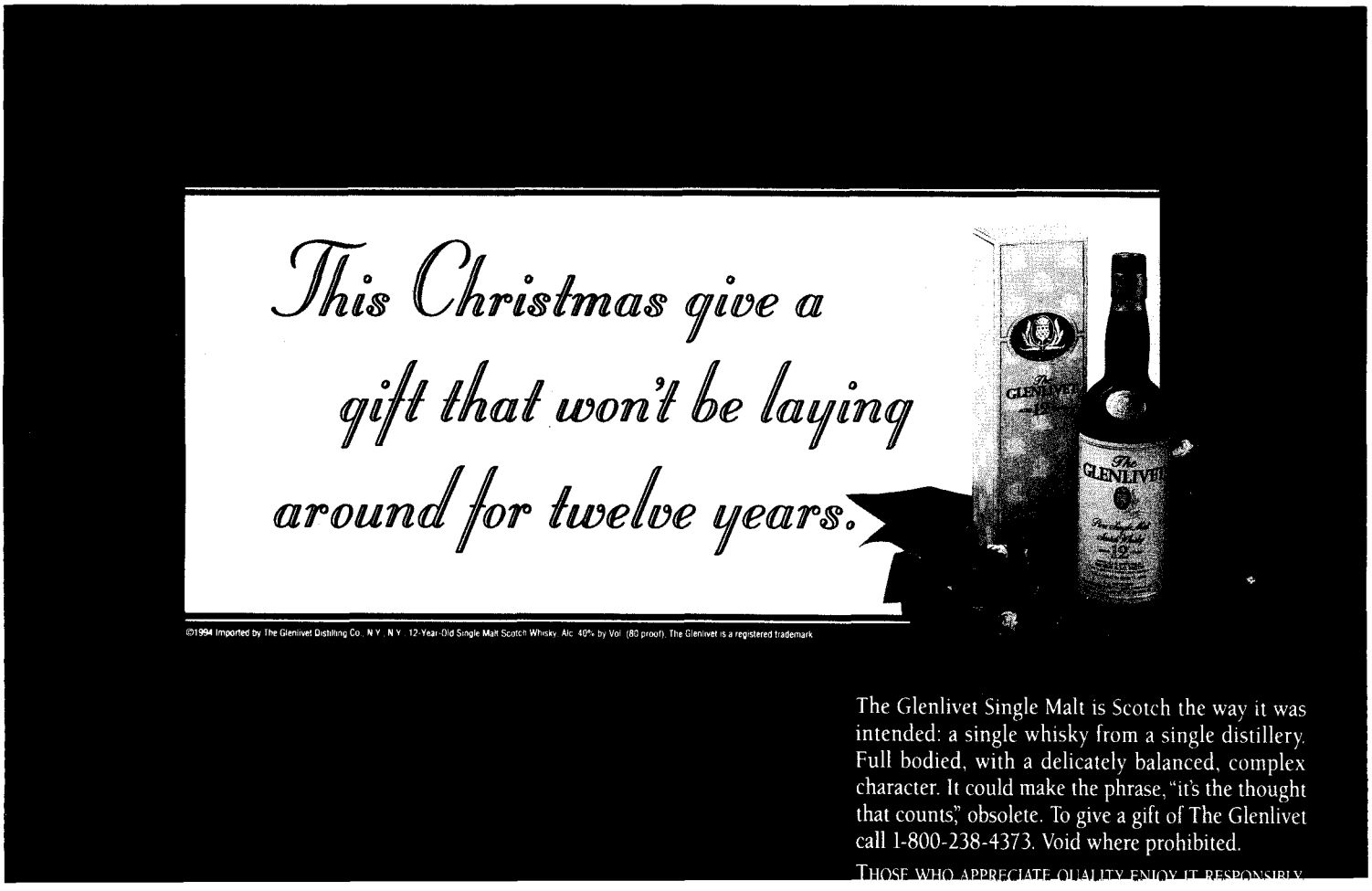
Andrew Kadar's arguments of reverse discrimination merit a closer look. Kadar builds his case that women, not men, are medicine's favored sex in part by citing data that women have more contacts with the health-care system—more visits to physicians, more hospitalizations, more drug prescriptions—than men do. However, Kadar admits that merely counting health services delivered is a crude measure of quality. Moreover, it obscures important concerns about overspecialization and the fragmentation of services, since even healthy women must visit two physicians—an internist and a gynecologist—to attend to their basic health needs. In addition, women often use health visits to obtain medical information for their entire family. Indeed, advocates point to women's health behavior to make the case that women's-health *research* is underfunded relative to their central role in health delivery.

Disputing the growing literature that documents women's under-representation in federally funded biomedical research, Kadar cites an outdated (1987) National Institutes of Health "inventory." The report tabulated percentages spent on female-specific conditions (13), male-specific conditions (6), and conditions that affect both sexes (81). However, this approach counts studies on conditions that affect both sexes—heart disease, for example—in a general category, rather than a sex-specific one, even if they employed all-male study populations. A more accurate methodology would calculate the representation of women in all NIH-sponsored research except for studies on exclusively male conditions. However, when the General Accounting Office tried to mount such a study, in 1990, it was thwarted, "because there is no readily accessible source of data on the demographics of NIH study populations."

Kadar jeopardizes his scientific credibility by suggesting that an *observational study* (the all-female nurses' health study) is comparable to a *clinical trial* (the all-male physicians' health study) because the nurses' study was larger and lasted a year longer. Unlike a clinical trial, an observational study does not randomly assign participants to treatment and control groups, so a favorable outcome in an observational study may be due to factors other than the treatment. For this and other reasons scientists draw only cautious conclusions from observational studies.

But do all-male study populations really harm women? Or, as Kadar suggests, do men take all the risks "while women wait to benefit from the advances"? The example of balloon angioplasty, which involves the insertion of tiny "balloons" to inflate obstructed arteries in patients with heart disease, is instructive. Kadar maintains that complications due to women's smaller arteries—women's arteries often burst during, and experience greater obstruction after, surgery—help to account for women cardiac patients' receiving less-aggressive care. However, rather than merely "controlling" for sex differences in artery size, as Kadar recommends, one might instead ask whether the balloon devices were designed according to the larger dimensions of male patients' hearts. Women's-health advocates have asserted that research on all-male populations—which implies that the male represents the species norm—is not chivalrous but potentially dangerous to women's health.



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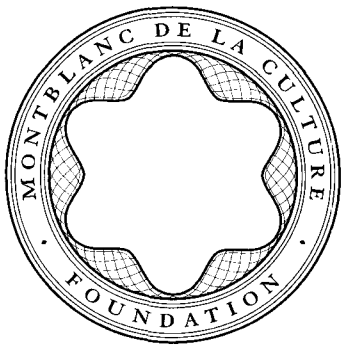

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Finally, Kadar suggests that the numerous organizations devoted to women's health needs—the National Breast Cancer Coalition, the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, the American Medical Women's Association, and the NIH Office for Research on Women's Health—and the medical specialty obstetrics and gynecology are evidence that men's health is relatively neglected. On the contrary, "men's health" is simply known as internal medicine, and "men's genito-urinary health" as urology—just as "men's studies" is called history and "men's centers" student centers. The creation of programs, organizations, and institutions devoted to women aims to fill gaps in knowledge and to promote a gender-neutral perspective, not to provoke gender wars.

Kathryn C. Bemmann
Tracy L. Johnson
American Medical Women's Association
Alexandria, Va.

Andrew Kadar replies:

All attempts to show that the overall amount of research on women's health is less than that on men's health have failed. Bemmann and Johnson's criticism of the 1987 NIH survey as "outdated" seems curious. Because of pressure for increased spending on women's health, funding today favors women more often than it did in 1987. The 1987 NIH survey was demanded by women's-health advocates in the belief that it would show that research into diseases specific to women was being neglected. When the results showed the exact opposite, they were declared "discredited" by the people who requested the study in the first place. Would the results be equally "discredited" if they supported the advocates' claims? Incidentally, even these data have been misused to bolster claims that women are neglected in medical research, by citing the women-specific allocation of 13.5 percent without mentioning the men's share.

The NIH spends more than twice as much money on female-specific conditions as on male-specific conditions. Furthermore, none of the efforts to show that women are neglected in the research of diseases that afflict both sexes have produced any convincing results. Instead we have advocates citing isolated areas that they believe show the neglect of women.

Perhaps the most meritorious of these claims center on a series of studies performed in the 1970s and 1980s which looked at coronary-artery disease in men. This disease is three times as common in men under age sixty-five as it is in women of that age group, and diseases are often studied in the group at highest risk. Nevertheless, a good argument can be made for repeating these studies in women, and many of them—including the aspirin one—are now under way. The aspirin study—the physicians' health study that Bemmann and Johnson mention—is the most celebrated of the cardiac-research reports on all-male groups, and critics have charged that the effect of aspirin on women was totally ignored. In my article I pointed out that this is not so but that the men's study was more rigorous. Do Bemmann and Johnson need to distort my position to attack it? And what does that say about their credibility? As for smaller arteries being more easily obstructed than larger ones, the physics of flow in pipes has more influence on this than sex bias does.

AIDS was originally studied in men because it presented first in men. When women started coming down with AIDS, research began in them as well. At the start of 1992 men made up 92.6 percent of AIDS patients in the United States. Is it so surprising that more work had been done on the male presentation of this disease? Is the case for medical discrimination against women so weak that this is among the principal complaints?

Advocates may now know that women receive more care than men, but one of their first charges was that women's complaints were taken less seriously and resulted in less care. When this was studied and found to be false, the argument was turned on its head: more care for women became discrimination against women. Without getting into the complex issue of how care is determined to be "unnecessary" and how valid these charges are, the list of procedures claimed to be needlessly performed includes heart surgery, vascular surgery (carotid endarterectomies), back surgery (laminectomies), and prostate surgery. Clearly, women are not singled out for "unnecessary" procedures.

The Clinton health plan proposed to cover Pap smears, pelvic exams, and mammograms for women, but it excluded testicular- and prostate-cancer screen-

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ing for men. If we search the spectrum of governmental policies, it's at least as easy to find instances in which men are denied care given to women as it is to find the converse.

Medicine does not assume, nor has it ever assumed, that the male represents the species norm. This oft-repeated canard is an insult to the intelligence of doctors, nurses, and medical researchers. Does anybody really believe that medical practitioners and researchers were unaware that male and female bodies were different until women's-health advocates pointed this out to them in the 1980s? This charge demonstrates perfectly the level of silliness to which sex-bias claims have descended. The inspiration for charges of sex bias comes from politics, not medicine. How else can one explain calling internal medicine "men's health" when the majority of office visits to doctors of internal medicine are made by women?

I do not believe that medicine has an inherent bias against either men or women. However, since a significant part of medical care and research funding is allocated by the squeaky-wheel distribution system, women receive a larger share of both.

Jeffrey Kahn
Minneapolis, Minn.

Underground

In his "Notes From the Underground" (August *Atlantic*), Fred Hapgood neglected to mention one type of facility whose subterranean location has received much critical attention of late—namely, prisons. In November of 1991 the State of Oklahoma opened a new maximum-security unit effectively sited underground at the state penitentiary in McAlester. H-Unit is an electronically controlled facility designed to minimize contact between inmates and prison staff. Although the facility is brand-new, the conditions in H-Unit were described by Amnesty International last May as constituting "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment" in violation of international standards, in good measure because prisoners are confined in windowless cells for twenty-three or twenty-four hours a day with virtually no natural light or natural air.

The importance of H-Unit stems in large part from the fact that it may well be a model for other prisons in the future. If so, consideration of the economic and construction issues that Hapgood describes will need to be supplemented with concern for humanitarian and quality-of-life standards as well.

William F. Schulz
Amnesty International
New York, N.Y.

Fred Hapgood makes a case for underground construction, based on economics, desirability, and environmental benefits. Unfortunately, he fails to mention significant environmental and economic costs associated with such construction.

According to Hapgood, underground construction is an environmentally friendly alternative to surface construction. By going underground we can preserve the earth's surface for "green" stuff like plants and animals. But Hapgood never considers where to put all the millions of cubic feet of crushed rock left over from underground construction. Maybe we could start by covering some of the obsolete highways and pavement he suggests could be torn up and replanted. But given that crushed rock occupies more volume than the original rock in place, I suspect we'll end up burying many acres that are currently covered by grass and trees. Our progress underground will be marked by the growth of a new type of artificial landform consisting of crushed rock—landforms reminiscent of the spoils (tailings) heaps that are the expensive and ugly detritus of our reliance on extracted minerals.

Environmentalists, scientists, Environmental Protection Agency regulators, and many others will closely scrutinize the impact of these new artificial landforms. Mountains of extracted, crushed rock can be expected to leach unpleasant compounds into our soils, water supplies, and air, adding significant costs for reclamation and health care to the true tally for underground construction.

I suggest that we leave the creation of major landforms to nature.

William T. Barton
Ithaca, N.Y.

Fred Hapgood replies:

There is a market for landfill now. Should that be saturated, then the right thing to do would be to build hills, which would of course be landscaped. Hills are to the surface what reefs are to the submarine environment—a texture that enriches the biota by widening the variety of ecological niches available. The landscape used to be much richer in hills (the original name of Boston meant "Three Mountains," of which hardly a trace remain), and it would be nice to think that someday the old complexity of our surface might be restored. I do not share William Barton's preference for buildings over hills. There are very few buildings in the world I would not swap in an instant for even a modest hill.

Cormac McCarthy

Perhaps John Aldridge wrote "Cormac McCarthy's Bizarre Genius" (August *Atlantic*) simply to get a rise out of "passionate admirers" like me, who have devoted more attention to McCarthy's earlier work than Aldridge apparently has. To say that "no trace of communal order and history or any basis for moral judgment or conflict is to be found anywhere" in McCarthy's first three novels ignores, for example, the opening auction of *Child of God,* which throws Lester Ballard off his land. To say that the author of *Suttree* possesses "almost no vision at all of the subtler complexities of human feeling and thought" is ridiculous.

Jim Stokely
Louisville, Ky.

I'd like to thank John Aldridge for providing some clarity in the muddy river of praise following Cormac McCarthy's work. I had just read *All the Pretty Horses,* and was grateful to Aldridge for fingering some of the problems I encountered in the novel. McCarthy's penchant for referring to his characters primarily by pronouns instead of their names, for instance, is as confusing in *Horses* as in the earlier novels. Until John Grady Cole and Lacey Rawlins ride off together, it's difficult telling who's who in the crush of characters. More important, Aldridge recognizes McCarthy's "extremely narrow vision of the human condition and almost no vision at all of the subtler complexities of human feeling and thought" and that "these deficiencies . . . were to a degree camouflaged by the high elegance of the prose and the idiosyncratic originality of his fictional forms."

Boman Desai
Chicago, Ill.

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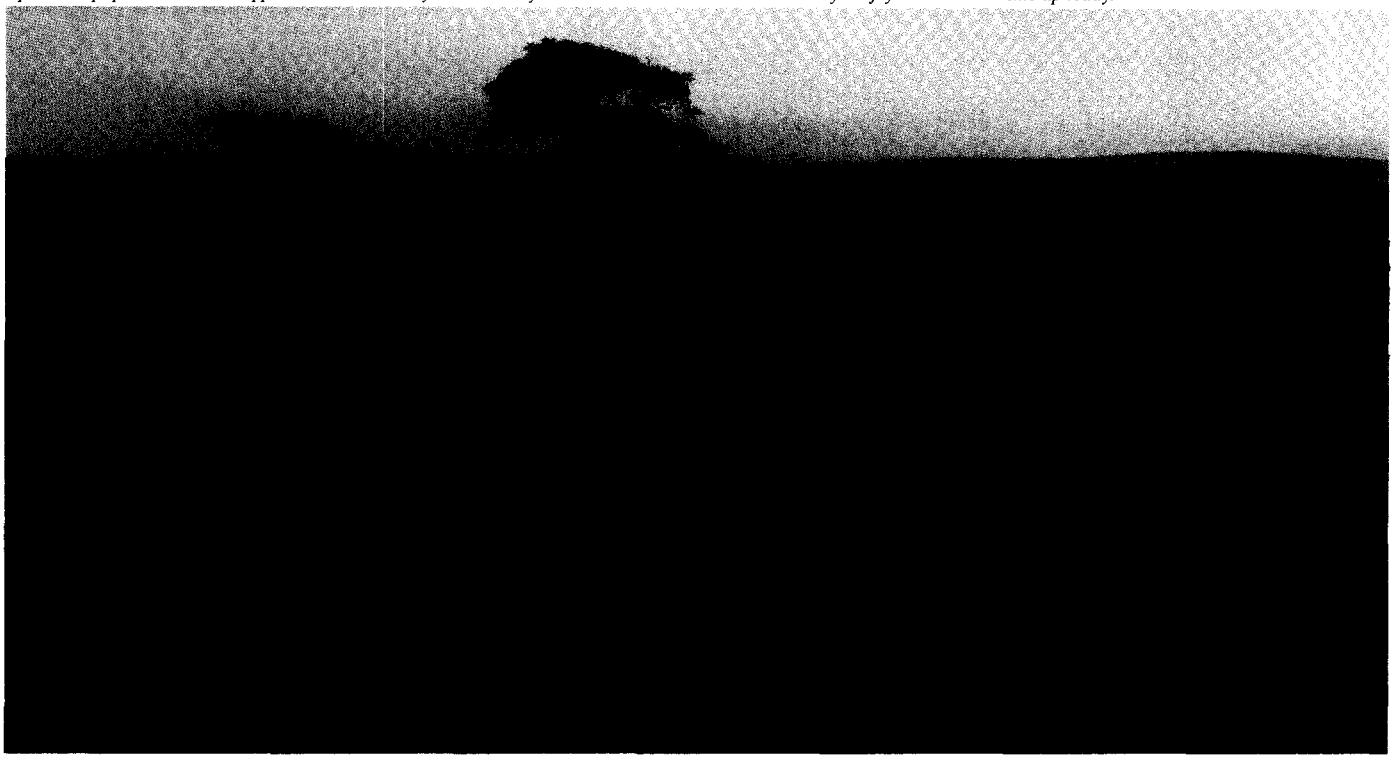

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Thanks to a newly refined engine and increased torque output, the Jaguar XJ6 is even quicker than before. For those who demand yet more

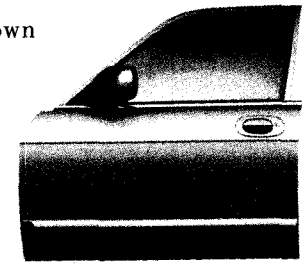
With their even more graceful lines, sensuous, sculpted hood and integrated rounded headlights, the new XJ6, Vanden Plas, XJR and XJ12 recollect the great Jaguars of the past, from the stunning XK120 to the classic Series III.

But while the new XJ Series borrows some of its understated elegance from earlier models, beneath the surface these Jaguars offer uncompromising new levels of technological expertise and quality.

Just one example: a quicker, more refined AJ16 engine, which can now power the sedan from 0–60 in just eight seconds.

We have made it quieter.

Whether you're traveling down a twisting country lane or picking your way through a congested highway, you'll appreciate how hushed these Jaguars have become. New welded door frames are more rigid, and more resistant to high-speed "flutter" and "whistling." A new one-piece carpet with sound-resistant damping further helps reduce road noise.



New door panels not only fit flusher, they're now double sealed to reduce wind noise.

We have made it safer.

Jaguars have long been rated among the very safest of cars—not surprising when you consider the energy-absorbing crumple zones, ABS brakes, dual air bags* and nimble, responsive suspension.

Improvements to the new XJ Series include front doors designed to "overlap" the back doors in a severe frontal collision, and added side impact protection.

We take your personal security just as seriously with a high-tech remote entry system: One touch of the key fob unlocks the driver's door only, two

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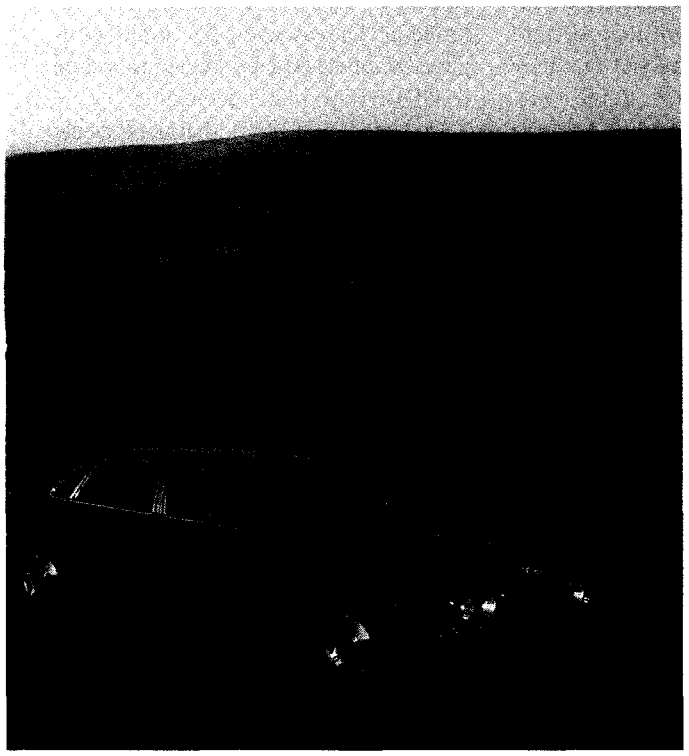
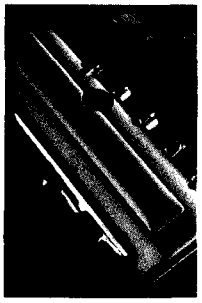


muscle. our new limited-production supercharged 322 HP Jaguar XJR can take you from 0–60 in an awe-inspiring 6.7 seconds.

touches unlock all doors and the trunk, and a third touch pops open the trunk.

We have made it smarter.

The new XJ Series takes advantage of virtually every technological development imaginable to create a car that seems to anticipate your every desire.



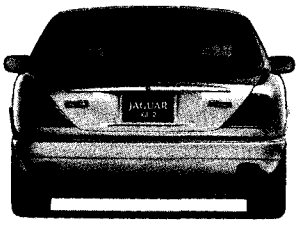
A significant improvement: a sophisticated engine management system that optimizes ignition timing, fuel injection, and other functions according to engine speed, driving conditions–even barometric pressure. It also includes a complete on-board diagnostic system.

Like the new speed-sensitive steering system that automatically boosts assistance when you need it–parking, for example–then progressively reduces it as the car gains speed. Other features that sense your speed and adjust accordingly: the audio and climate control systems.

And while it's easy to see the changes we have made to the exterior of the XJ Series, more difficult to view are the countless significant changes we've made to improve the Series' quality.

Major improvements include a new state-of-the-art assembly line at our Brown's Lane Plant in Coventry, England, built expressly for these models.

Another major improvement–the electronic engine management system, with full on-board diagnostic capability. We've also added a new world-class electrical system. Key connectors are gold-plated to resist corrosion. These are just some of the reasons why all Jaguars are confidently backed with a 4-year/50,000-mile warranty.**



In addition to integrated, color-keyed bumpers and new tail lights, new tail-end styling cues include tapered panels and a new trunk lid, giving the car a more raised profile.

The new XJ Series. With its intelligent new technology, it marks a departure from every Jaguar that has come before it.

But in its own extraordinary manner, it remains like every Jaguar: unique, spirited, and with its soul very much intact. For more information or for details regarding our aggressive leasing program, please call 1-800-4-JAGUAR.

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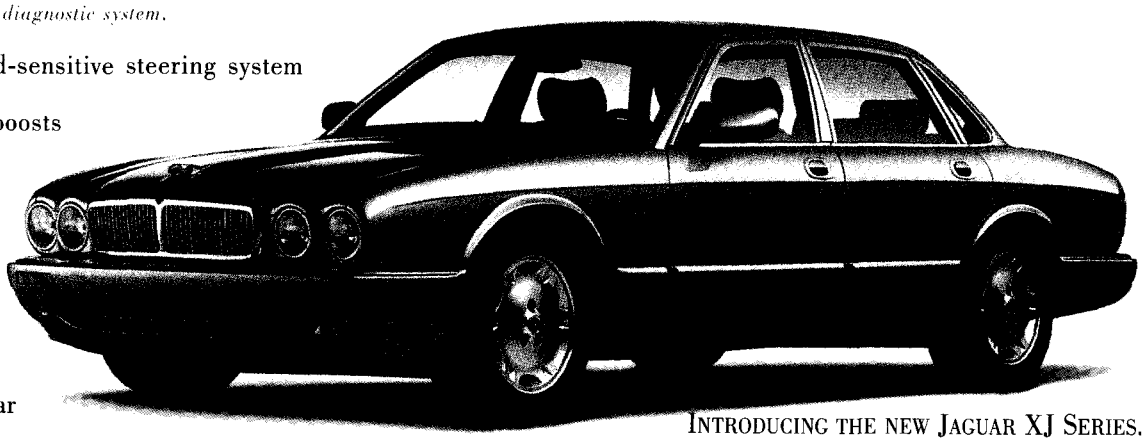

INTRODUCING THE NEW JAGUAR XJ SERIES.

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Incorrigible

I am mystified by the errors and animus in Amitai Etzioni's article "Incorrigible" (July *Atlantic*). He uses America Works to support his theory that the private sector is no fix for this country's intractable welfare mess.

He begins with a howler—that we could not put many of the 1.1 million people on welfare in New York City to work. Perhaps he just didn't know that more than half of these are the children of welfare recipients. Or was he suggesting child labor for the kids of these moms?

He then tops himself with the accusation that America Works cherry-picks only the cream of the welfare population, preferring "to work with clients who are easy to place." The average worker we place has been on welfare five years. Only 25 percent of the national welfare population have been on that long. Are they the cream, as he proclaims, or the sour cream?

The showstopper he serves up is that we put people to work after one week of training and this is insufficient to move them to employment. He is right that one week is not enough. But he is wrong in claiming that we place after one week. People stay up to eight weeks. They are then placed in jobs with America Works providing intense on-site support for four months (or longer if necessary), until the company hires the worker. Day care, transportation, skills development, and other problems that interfere with retaining the job are handled. Perhaps this is why after seventeen months 75 percent are still off welfare.

Peter Cove
America Works
New York, N.Y.

Amitai Etzioni replies:

Regarding Peter Cove's assertion that America Works training lasts more than one week—"up to eight weeks"—I would suggest that eight weeks is a very short period. However, at least one of the company's major contracts with New York City calls for the payment of $980 for each welfare client the company *enrolls* in a *one-week* course, and another $3,855 after a person is *two days* on a job. This may be gold-picking (or picking the taxpayers' pockets) rather than cherry-picking.

Finally, it is true that children are included among the 1.1 million welfare clients in New York City and that they should not be made to work. But fear not. Given the few thousands that America Works has placed so far, many only temporarily, it will not get to the children—or most others.

Advice & Consent

In his engaging and largely sympathetic review essay "The Great American Studies Novel" (September *Atlantic*), Charles Trueheart retells the story I tell in *Shade of the Raintree: The Life and Death of Ross Lockridge, Jr., Author of Raintree County*, but with a difference: he takes my father's novel to be literary "goulash" that would probably not even get published today, let alone be "so lavishly received" as it was back in 1948.

As one of the author's sons, biased and compromised, I've tried not to make my own value judgments overt, but I've been both pleased and surprised that Trueheart is the only contemporary critic—of more than a score writing reviews so far—to frown upon my father's assault on Mount Parnassus.

What Trueheart calls my father's "nearly deranged self-regard" extended only to his writing; otherwise he was known as a whimsical, likable fellow, always helping out in a midwesternly way. In a period of stress and self-depletion his great literary ambition sank to mere grandiosity in dealings with his publisher, and then to depression and suicide at thirty-three. In contrast, his hero in *Raintree County*—a novel thought by some to be more elegiac than "relentlessly optimistic"—learns to live with the fact that he was never meant to be Shakespeare.

I read my father's life as tragic narrative, not as moral fable or cautionary tale—for I wonder if we are missing something in having few modern American writers audacious and, yes, "naive" enough in their visionary labors to "expose [themselves] to ridicule and disappointment" on a large scale.

Larry Lockridge
New York, N.Y.

As the director of the annual Loebner Prize Competition in Artificial Intelligence, I would seem to be one of the "diehards" to whom Frederick Allen referred in "Unreasonable Facsimile" (August *Atlantic*). Allen's engaging article could use some minor debugging.

He stated, first of all, that none of the eight judges—all members of the national press—mistook a computer for a person this year. True, but one of the judges ranked the winning computer program as *more human* than two of the hidden confederates. Turing would have been pleased. During the first two years of the event we employed everyday folk as judges—"average interrogators," as Turing envisioned in his original challenge in 1950. Students, a librarian, a photocopy-machine operator, and so on, were indeed fooled a number of times. In fact, in 1991 five of the ten judges mistook the winning program for a person.

Allen also asserted, based on his three-hour experience with the contest, that no machine will *ever* pass the Turing test. I'd wager that he's not a programmer. I am, and so is Dr. Loebner. Give me a crack team of ten programmers, unlimited processing time and power, a large budget, and five years, and I'll crack this nut wide open. It can and will be done. (Diehard language, for sure.) I spend much of my time in Cambridge, Massachusetts (where *all* intelligence is artificial), so I'm used to a little hubris. But does Allen presume to know what 20 million programmers around the world are doing—or are capable of doing?

The crux: Allen asks what use such a system would be. Good Lord, what use would a universal interface to all knowledge be? A talking, thinking entity that has instantaneous access to most of the world's databases and, almost certainly, to all its intelligent brethren around the planet? An entity that never sleeps, that could clone itself in seconds, that has a perfect memory? That could monitor most of the world's financial transactions simultaneously? That could track and coordinate every medical advance in real time? That could attempt to solve a problem by consulting with a thousand human experts and a million machine intelligences at the same time? We're talking about an invention that would be worth many billions of dollars, a device that will change our world fundamentally and forever. If you doubt that, *just ask it.*

Robert Epstein
San Diego, Calif.

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A MEMORY

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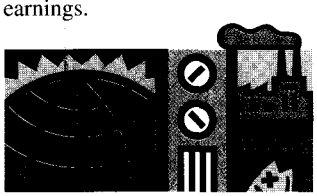
THE DECEMBER ALMANAC

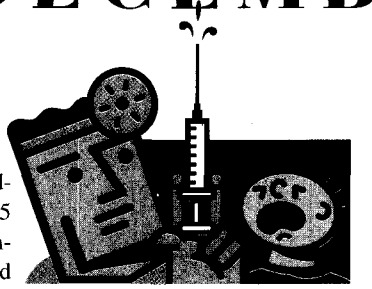
Environment

December **31**, by today, according to a provision of the 1985 Farm Bill, farmers must have implemented government-approved soil-conservation programs on all cropland deemed "highly erodible" by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service, or lose eligibility for federal price supports, disaster payments, and crop insurance. Soil erosion and water contamination from agriculture remain serious environmental threats; by practicing conservation methods such as no-till planting, crop rotation, and contour farming, farmers could reduce erosion of the country's 135 million acres of vulnerable cropland by 66 percent. Compliance rates are likely to be high: three quarters of the farmers in a recent survey expected the measures to have a neutral or positive effect on their earnings.



Arts & Letters

The Ecology Channel, whose round-the-clock programming aims at capitalizing on the burgeoning interest in the environment, goes on the air this month. Its lineup includes news flashes, business features, tips on urban gardening and energy saving, shopping services, animation, and a Russian-Lithuanian science-fiction mini-series about life in 2084. The channel's founder, Eric McLamb, characterizes its programming as "entertainment-driven" and "upbeat": "If you come out with the green flag, yelling 'Save the Earth!' you're going to scare a lot of people off," he has said. The channel may eventually acquire a global reach: plans are already afoot to develop programming for Argentina and Mexico.

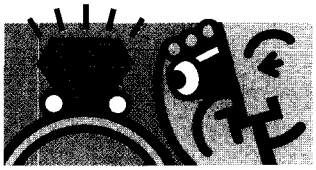


Health & Safety

December ushers in the annual chicken-pox season, which usually runs through spring. Each year the virus afflicts some 4 million people, three quarters of whom are under the age of 10, and causes nearly 10,000 hospitalizations and about 90 deaths. These figures could soon plummet: the Food and Drug Administration is in the final stages of reviewing a vaccine for chicken pox. A similar vaccine has been used widely in Japan for the past decade, where it has been very successful in preventing infection among the children who have received it. Also this month the ski season gets into full swing, along with a National Ski Patrol program—in its first year of national operation—aimed at making the sport safer. Under the Outdoor First Care program participating ski-resort personnel, from lift operators to food-service staff, will be trained in simple first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation in case they are the first to arrive at the scene of an emergency.

Demographics

Jewelers reap a double bonus this month, benefiting not only from holiday shopping but also from a preponderance of engagements to be married, more of which occur in December than in any other month. Although precise monthly figures for engagements are hard to come by, the extent of December's lead is suggested by the fact that each year far more diamonds are sold in December than in any other month. Nearly 40 percent of the diamond jewelry sold last year was sold in December, with May running a distant second at less than 10 percent. The reasons for this burst of activity probably include the tendency to reflect, as the holidays approach, on spiritual matters and the importance of family, and the desire to announce an engagement during one of the few times of the year when families are predictably gathered. With engagements currently lasting an average of 14 months—up from only nine or 10 months a decade ago—a December betrothal also positions a couple for a spring wedding.

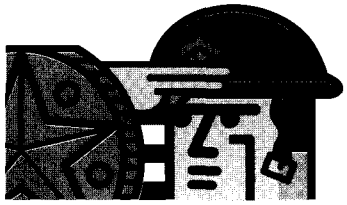


The Skies

December **9**, Venus, visible in the early-morning hours this month, today reveals its greatest brilliance for the year. The only brighter objects in the sky are the Sun and the Moon. **14**, the often-spectacular Geminid meteor shower peaks between midnight and dawn. The nearly full Moon will interfere with viewing until it sets, at about 3:30 A.M. EST. **17**, Full Moon, also known this month as the Long Night or the Big Freezing Moon. **21**, the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year.

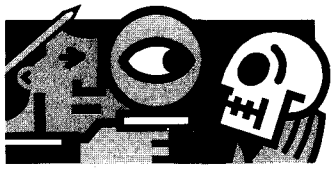
Government

By this month the Citizens Commemorative Coin Advisory Committee to the U.S. Mint must submit its final recommendations regarding subjects for the coming five years. The panel was formed last year in response to a proliferation of commemorative-coin bills in Congress; the mint would like to limit the number of commemorative-coin programs each year to two. A likely candidate for the committee's backing: a coin to observe the anniversary of the surrender of Japan in the Second World War—the subject of 118 of the 381 proposals received through the committee's public-outreach program. (The runner-up, the centennial of the Spanish-American War, generated a paltry 16 proposals.) However, the committee's latitude will be sharply curtailed by the fact that seven sets of coins are already scheduled, including a Civil War battlefield memorial (1995) and coins for the Atlanta Olympic Games (1995 and 1996).



50 Years Ago

Raymond Chandler, writing in the December, 1944, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "Hemingway says somewhere that the good writer competes only with the dead. The good detective story writer (there must after all be a few) competes not only with all the unburied dead but with all the hosts of the living as well. And on almost equal terms; for it is one of the qualities of this kind of writing that the thing that makes people read it never goes out of style. The hero's tie may be a little out of the mode and the good gray inspector may arrive in a dogcart instead of a streamlined sedan with siren screaming, but what he does when he gets there is the same old futzing around with timetables and bits of charred paper and who trampled the jolly old flowering arbutus under the library window."



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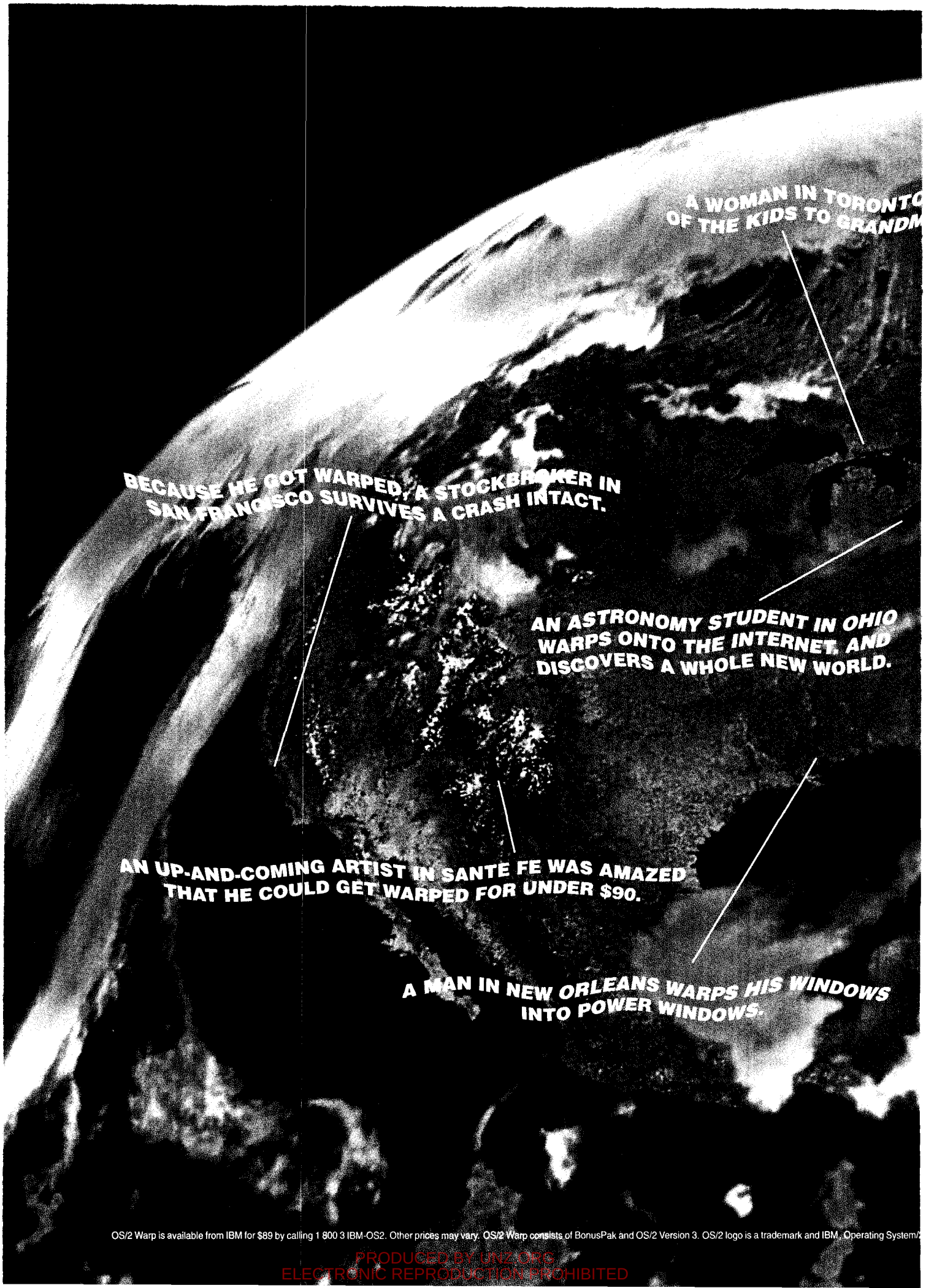

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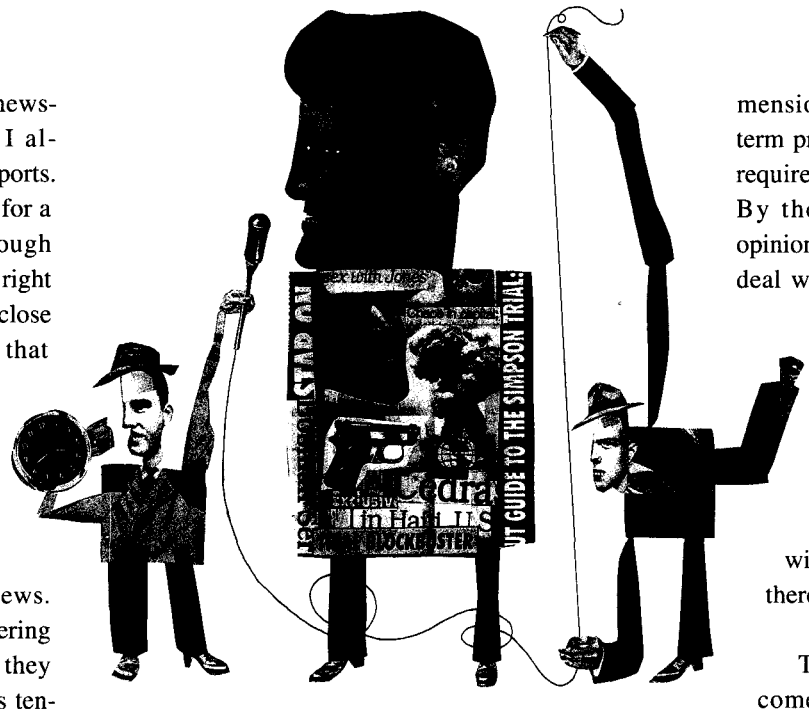
Did You Have a Good Week?

The new unit of political significance



WHEN I read the newspaper at home, I always start with sports. But when I've been away for a while and am going through old papers, I find I can flip right past the sports pages. The close games and league races that are so absorbing when they are happening *right now* are boring once the suspense is gone.

More and more, it's the same with the real news. I'm not talking about covering political campaigns as if they were sporting events. This tendency has existed for decades and is well understood. Rather, I mean a development whereby most of the serious news we get is presented with the same artificial, short-lived intensity as sports. Precisely because we know that sports don't matter in a life-and-death sense, we can happily act for a while as if they did. In a few minutes it will all be over, and soon we'll have some other, equally interesting showdown to watch.

Through May and early June of this year, for example, the United States seemed headed toward a nuclear confrontation with North Korea. Numerous reports said that President Bill Clinton had come to his "testing time" and "moment of truth." Of course, the "day of reckoning," as *The Wall Street Journal*'s political analyst Gerald Seib called it, did not come. I interviewed a South Korean diplomat, in Seoul, just after former President Jimmy Carter's visit, and he described the moment when he knew that the crisis had passed.

"It was when the O. J. Simpson car chase began," he said. "As soon as the American media had O. J. to deal with, you could *feel* the weight of CNN and the American pundits come off our shoulders."

North Korea's nuclear program returned to its natural dimensions, as a serious long-term problem but not one that required a response *right now*. By the time the American opinion machine was ready to deal with an issue other than O. J., the Whitewater hearings were at hand, along with the buildup for an invasion of Haiti. North Korea's nuclear rods, it goes without saying, were still there.

▪ ▪ ▪

The Clinton years have come across as an endless stream of emergencies, each seeming to demand total attention while it is under way, but many forgettable as soon as they are done.

Zoë Baird. Kimba Wood. Travelgate. The haircut on the LAX tarmac. David Koresh and the Waco siege. Document-shredding at the Rose law firm. The death of Vincent Foster. Webster Hubbell. Barbra Streisand at the White House. The secrecy of the health-care task force. Casualties in Somalia. Criticism of Les Aspin and Warren Christopher. The Administration's fights for its political life over the first budget bill, over NAFTA, over the crime bill, over health reform. The showdown with China over human rights and with Singapore over caning. The latest skirmish in the trade war with Japan. Threats of action against Serbia, Haiti, North Korea, Cuba. Paula Jones. Whitewater recusals. Joshua Steiner and his diary. The disasters in Bosnia and Rwanda.

by James Fallows

This list looks preposterously jumbled, and that is the point of it. Some of the events, in the Balkans and Rwanda, were world tragedies. Others, involving the Branch Davidians and Vincent Foster, were tragic on a smaller scale. Some—including the budget plan, health care, and NAFTA—will play a

Illustration by David Plunkert

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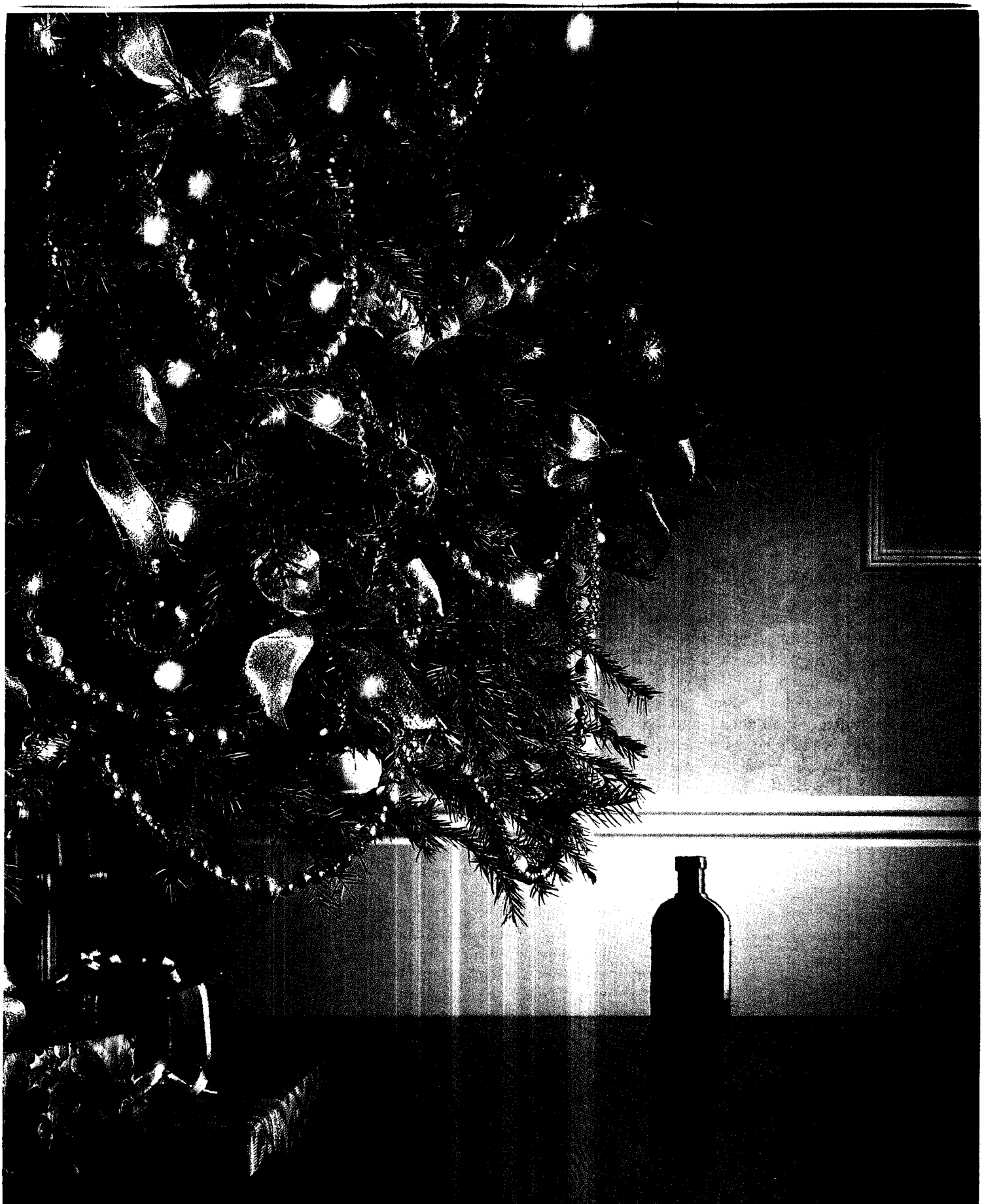

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part in any account of the Clinton years. Others were temporary flaps, including quite a few whose plot lines are difficult to keep straight even now.

Yet every one of these issues, at least for a while, got right-now treatment by the press. We all recognize the signs that an issue has become an Issue: CNN specials, live C-SPAN or NPR hearings coverage, same-day discussion on *Nightline* and *Crossfire*, end-of-the-week wrap-ups on the Washington talk shows.

Journalists claim that they do their jobs by raising questions and looking on skeptically, and that the President and other politicians must do theirs by providing satisfactory answers. This sounds nice. Yet by moving constantly from one emergency to the next, our opinion system has changed the very nature of the political and governmental fight.

For politicians and the public, the struggle is not so much to make or hear convincing arguments. It is to concentrate on anything at all. By the time the Clinton health plan floundered, in August, the conventional wisdom was that the President had waited too long before turning his full attention to it. I wonder why! Hearing about the latest crisis on talk shows and op-ed pages is for the public like living with car alarms in New York: the constant warnings are enough to make you uneasy—but not quite enough to inspire action.

▪ ▪ ▪

The right-now atmosphere has had at least two measurable effects, both bad, on the progress of Bill Clinton's Administration. First, it has played a part in the repeated premature obituaries for his presidency issued by the press. In May of last year, when Clinton had served eight percent of a four-year term, Elizabeth Drew was asked on the *McNeil/Lehrer NewsHour* what was at stake in the upcoming House vote on his budget plan. "Nothing less than the Clinton presidency," she replied.

In fairness to her, it was not an overstatement by the standards of the time. Within the month *Time* had published its cover story on "The Incredible Shrinking President," and *Newsweek* had run a cover picture of Clinton with the caption "What's Wrong?" Then David Gergen came to the White House, Clinton was declared to have made a new start, and the obituaries were forgotten—until they were rolled out again later that year and throughout the current one.

Bill Clinton is known to feel that the press is biased against him. Every President since John Kennedy has felt the same way. Maybe, by now, some reporters and columnists do dislike Clinton and his associates. If so, it's a trivial point. The real problem is that so many members of the press are comfortable making overstatements they must know cannot be true.

The other effect has been to add a curious edginess to the public mood. The opinion industry has become a powerful but unacknowledged lobby in behalf of U.S. intervention, for intervention's sake, around the world. On talk shows and TV specials we see a nightmarish sequence of emergencies appearing out of nowhere. Their backgrounds are not explained, and each crowds the others for airtime. The bridge at Gorazde. The Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire. Flotillas from Guantanamo Bay.

The implied message of each of these scenes is "Do something *now*!" The message is conveyed not only by the suffering itself but also by commentators who say that each case is a test of the President's "character" and "decisiveness." Some of the cases may demand immediate American action to relieve suffering. But the game-day mentality of the press has created a general enthusiasm for intervention almost as strong as the post-Vietnam fear of foreign entanglements. The enthusiasm sometimes wears off as an actual commitment nears, as with the intervention in Haiti. But while an Administration is deciding whether and how to get involved, the press chorus is saying, Act now!

▪ ▪ ▪

I keep mentioning the political talk shows because they have been the most important force for turning real news into sports. Some of their effects are obvious. *The McLaughlin Group*, *The Capital Gang*, *Crossfire*, the Sunday-morning talk shows, and the countless local knockoffs of the Washington battling-journalists shows reward reporters for exhibiting all the wrong traits. These talk shows highlight personality rather than work product, opinion and attitude rather than reporting, and prediction—which is less accurate than the bookies' line on games and for which the journalists are less accountable than bookies—instead of analysis of what has actually occurred.

The Fox network and ESPN spend hours each Sunday on the buildup to the day's slate of NFL football games and, when the games are done, dispose of the results in a few minutes. The political talk shows follow the same plan. Since each of the Washington shows covers more topics than any of the reporters can know about in detail, discussion naturally drifts to the one subject all the reporters do know: the pure mechanics of politics. ("How is Bob Dole likely to respond to this health-reform plan, Cokie?")

But the worst effect of the shows is so profound that it is barely noticed. This is to make the week the fundamental unit of political measurement. The central question on most of the shows is whether the President had a good week or a bad week. Getting a treaty ratified can mean a good week; a Travelgate-style staff shakeup can make a bad week. As in sports, the wins and losses are toted up as if they all had equal weight.

"It is rarely acknowledged, but asking 'Who won the week?' is a political act," Jay Rosen, of New York University, wrote last year in the magazine *Tikkun*. "The question . . . sets a rhythm to politics that permits the media to play timekeeper, umpire and, finally, judge. The question would not occur to an ordinary citizen."

Ordinary citizens, Rosen said, realize that politics concerns values and choices, not simply the up and down of each tactical fight. Will I pay more taxes? What will schools or health care be like? Will the Army have to stay and fight in Haiti or Bosnia? Most journalists recognize these issues, at least in theory. "But in . . . their day-to-day view of the scene," Rosen concluded, they "have accumulated a huge stake in the denial of meaning, the hollowing out of politics into a game of perceptions, to be played inside the media itself." They are, in other words, just playing the game.

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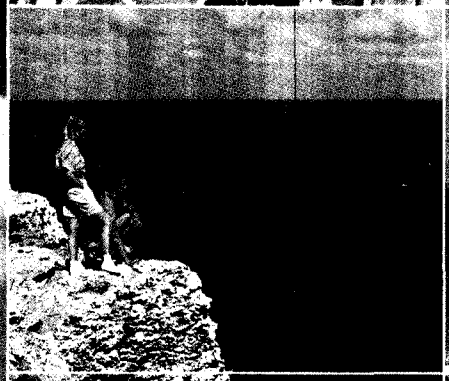

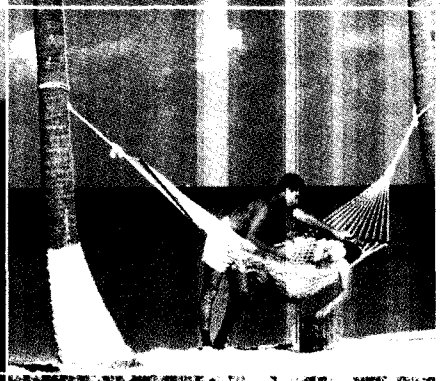

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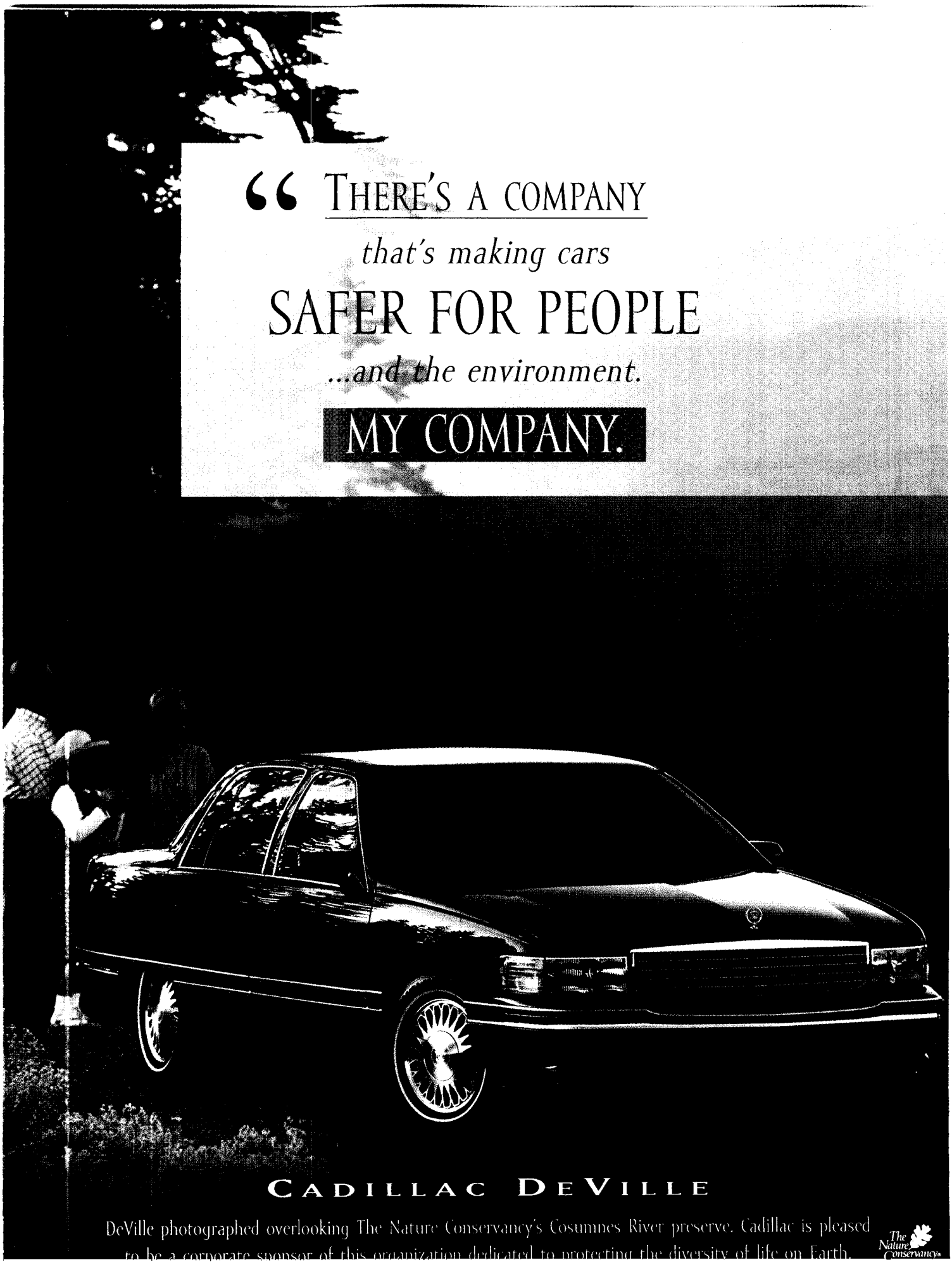

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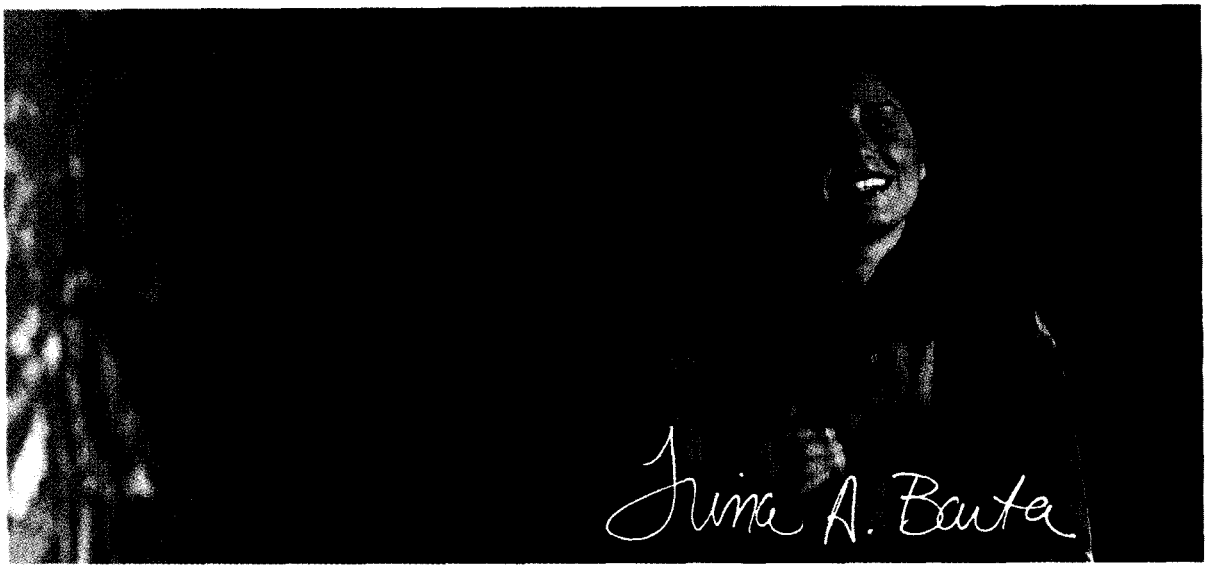

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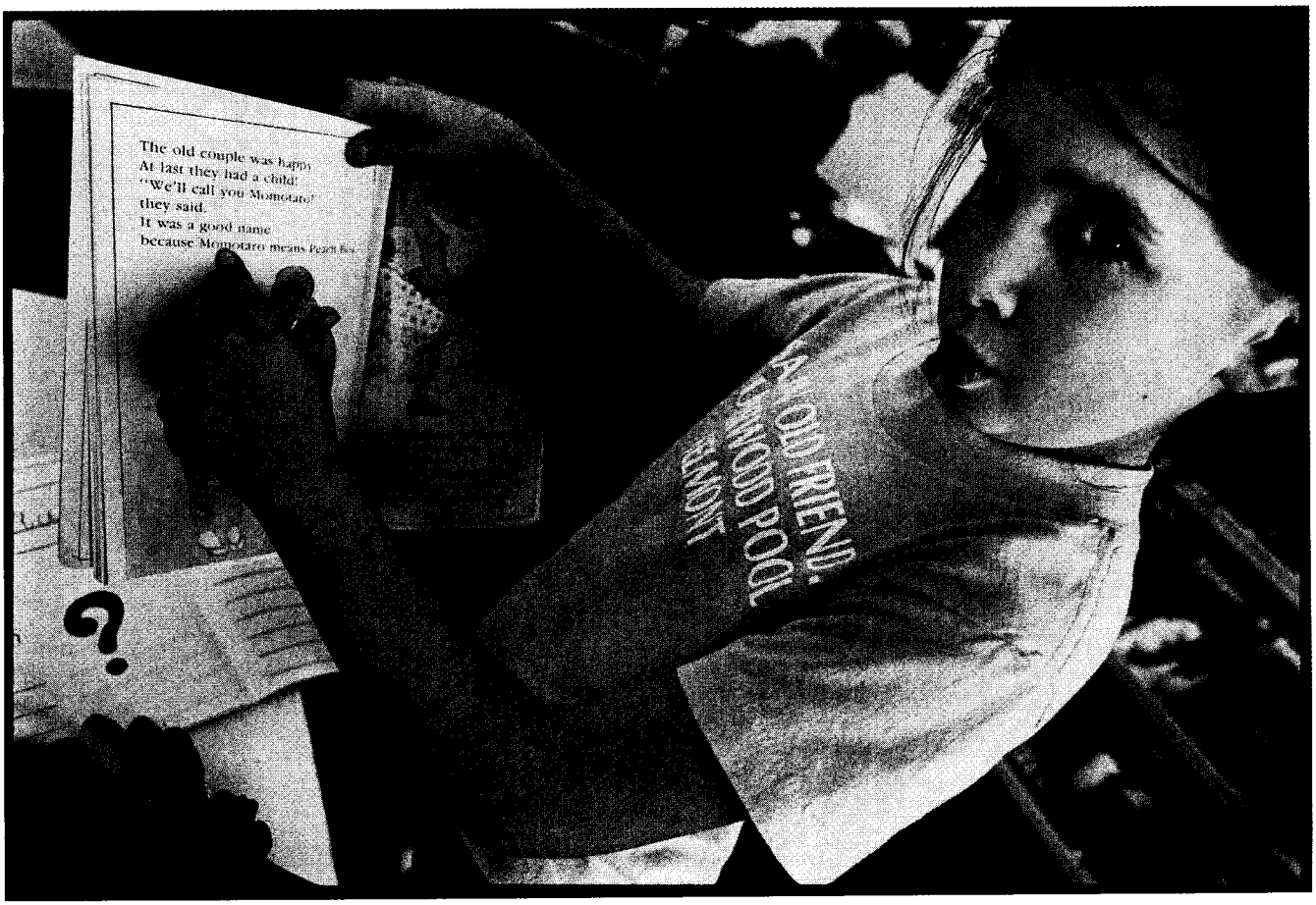

The Great Debate Revisited

Contention between proponents of the "meaning first" and the "phonics first" approaches to literacy goes back more than a century. That the former is now in the ascendant, the author argues, should be cause for concern

by Art Levine

In education no question has produced so much bitter debate for so long as this one: What is the best way to teach children to read? It is a critical issue, because there is clearly a need for drastic improvement in the way our schools do this essential job. As many as 20 percent of Americans above the age of sixteen are classified as functionally illiterate—unable to use print to perform essential tasks—and the ranks are growing every year. Even as the literacy crisis deepens, partisans of different reading approaches square off against each other. New teaching fads come and go.

The latest of these fads is known as the whole-language approach to literacy. It exposes children to interesting reading and writing at the expense of systematically teaching specific reading and writing skills. Whole-language teachers, for instance, encourage young students to recite along with them as the teachers read aloud from entertaining big-print books. One of their central beliefs is that language should be learned from "whole to part," with word-recognition skills being picked up by the child in the context of actual reading, writing, and "immersion" in a print-rich classroom. It is a philosophy that has won the backing of influential teachers' organizations, state and local education agencies, and tens of thousands of enthusiastic teachers. In Northfield, Illinois, for example, a reading specialist, Kenneth Smith, says that ever since the town's schools adopted the whole-language approach, a few years ago, "our kids are more motivated to read and write, and there's been an upturn in comprehension."

Unfortunately, there's little hard evidence to back up such claims across the board—and good reason to be concerned

Photographs by Jerry Berndt

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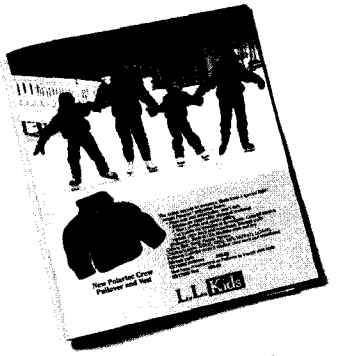

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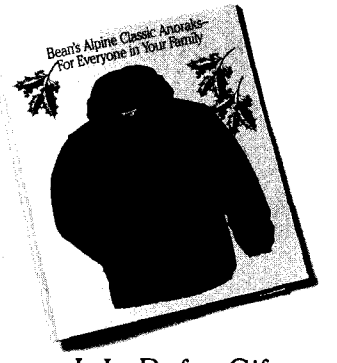

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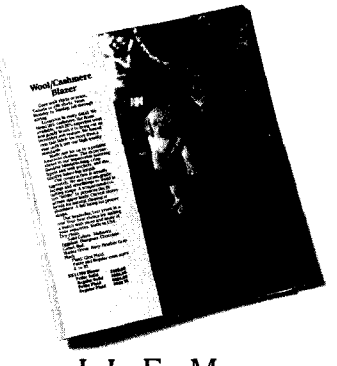

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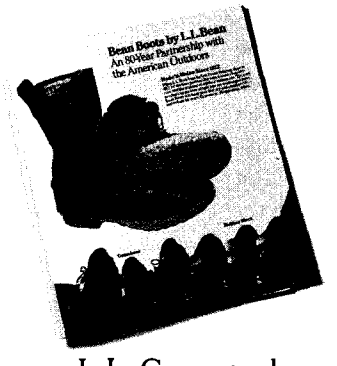

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Evidence is mounting that the underlying premises of the whole-language approach may be false.

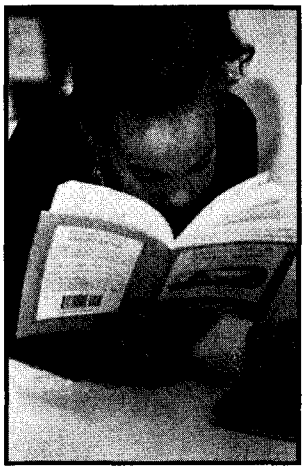
about the whole-language method when it's used to the exclusion of other approaches. It can deprive children, particularly low-income and other disadvantaged students, of the intensive instruction in phonics—the study of sound-letter relationships—that they need to master reading. "The widespread rush into whole language could have real dangers for certain kinds of kids, and it's scary to me," says Robert Slavin, a co-director of the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk, at Johns Hopkins University.

Evidence is also mounting that the approach may not be all that effective, and that its underlying premises may simply be false. Some of the many school districts that have tried the whole-language method have been attacked by educators and parents for a subsequent drop in test scores. In Texas a significant minority of schools have elected to spend their own money on phonics-based reading programs rather than use whole-language courses funded by the state; in Canada several citizens' groups have been formed to protest the widespread adoption of whole-language methods; and in England in late 1992 the British Education Secretary, alarmed at declining achievement scores, called for a return to instruction in basic skills. His action followed an advisory panel's report that derided "foolish methods that often lead to poor results," including Britain's version of whole-language teaching. Yet the whole-language philosophy continues to gain adherents among educators.

To be sure, even some critics of the method concede that traditional phonics instruction could benefit from several of the whole-language method's innovations, and they are seeking to combine the best of both approaches. Common sense would seem to suggest that most teachers should, in fact, blend systematic skills instruction with the use of appealing literature—and many, in fact, do. But in education, a field too often dominated by zealots and crazes, balanced approaches are sometimes harder to find than those shaped by the swinging pendulum of pedagogical fashion.

THE whole-language method is the latest incarnation of the "meaning-first" approach that has warred with the "phonics-first" approach to reading for more than a century. The traditional practice was to teach children the alphabetic code—the translation of abstract letters into sounds and words—before turning to actual reading. This approach was challenged in the mid-nineteenth century by Horace Mann, the secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. With a vehemence not unlike that of today's whole-language proponents, Mann denounced the letters of the alphabet as "bloodless, ghostly apparitions" that were responsible for "steeping [children's] faculties in lethargy." He argued that children should be taught whole, meaningful words first, and promoted the "look-say" method that by the 1920s had come to dominate American education.

In the 1950s, however, the meaning-first approach was itself denounced, in bitter, still-resonant political terms, in Rudolf Flesch's best-selling book *Why Johnny Can't Read*. Flesch's broadside led to a wave of authoritative new studies. These concluded that reading programs that include systematic, intensive phonics instruction work better than those that do not. By the early 1970s most schools had returned to an essentially phonics-based program. But as the pendulum swung once again, these programs found themselves being criticized by some teachers and academics for killing off children's interest in reading.



Most of the critics initially directed their fire, with some justification, at conventional teaching tools. They denounced worksheets used to drill students with tedious rows of words, the "basal readers" with their dull Dick-and-Jane-style stories, and reading groups organized by ability which stigmatize children and often promote failure.

Whole language supposedly offers an easy way to literacy. Ken Goodman, a professor of education at the University of Arizona, is one of the whole-language movement's leading academics. He and his colleagues have argued over the years that learning written language can be as natural as acquiring spoken language, and that children can learn to read primarily by figuring out the meaning of words in context. "Good readers don't read word by word," Goodman says. "They construct meaning from the [entire] text." Indeed, "accuracy is not an essential goal of reading."

Whole-language advocates believe that children should learn at their own pace and shouldn't be pushed too hard too soon. "We don't believe that phonics should be taught through 'skill and drill,'" says Bess Altwerger, an associate professor of education at Towson State University, in Baltimore. Phonics and related skills are supposed to be learned by the child in the context of actual reading and writing. The teacher should intrude only minimally into this process of discovery, at most waiting for the occasional "teachable moment" to pass along reading tips. As Goodman has said, "One cannot reconcile direct instruction with natural learning."

Adherents also contend that whole language is the best approach for minorities and disadvantaged students. "We don't lose struggling readers, because they don't get a defeatist attitude," says Mary Katsafanas, a talented and dedicated first-grade teacher in suburban Carroll County, Maryland. A movement publication, *The Whole Language Teachers Newsletter*, underscores that attitude: it recommends teaching children confronted by an unfamiliar word to "skip it, use prior information. . . . or put in another word that makes sense." It warns, "Don't sound-it-out." Although Katsafanas does sometimes gently suggest that students use letter sounds to figure out words, she sees the mistakes her students make as part of a

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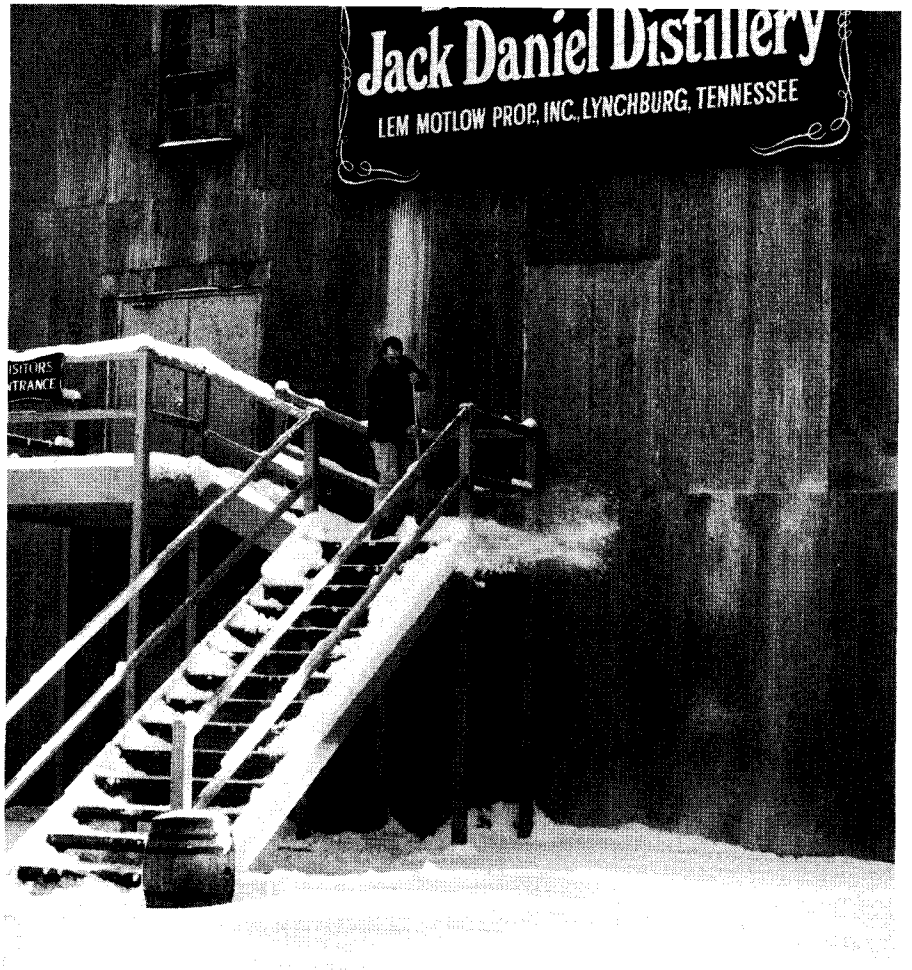
journey toward literacy rather than as errors to be criticized. During a visit to her class I heard a child read aloud from a rudimentary picture book; the girl wasn't corrected when she read the word "hug" instead of "cuddle." "She has the concept of the story," Katsafanas said later. This child lagged behind her classmates in both reading and writing.

The need for any explicit, systematic phonics instruction is a "myth," says Marie Carbo, the president of the National Reading Styles Institute, in Syosset, New York. Karen Smith, the associate executive director of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), says, "Phonics is just one part of the reading process. The child learns surrounded by language. It's just like oral language: through interaction with other language users, all of a sudden things start making sense." Besides the NCTE, the International Reading Association and other teachers' groups have endorsed the tenets of the whole-language movement. An independent organization, The Whole Language Umbrella, claims about 25,000 members and 450 local chapters (or teachers' support groups) in North America. The whole-language method is now used by perhaps a fifth of all teachers of reading, with an even larger proportion adapting elements of it, such as the greater use of authentic children's literature and the decreased use of intensive phonics.

The whole-language approach is also favored by most teachers' colleges and university-level education programs. Its influence is so pervasive that in 1987 a survey of forty-three texts used to train teachers of reading found that none advocated systematic phonics instruction—and only nine even mentioned that there was a debate on the issue. Some form of the whole-language ideology has been adopted by more than a dozen state education agencies.

DESPITE the spread of whole-language instruction, research and experience not only fail to demonstrate its superiority but also make a persuasive case for the importance of phonics.

Since 1981 only a few dozen studies in reputable education journals have even attempted to compare the reading scores achieved by the whole-language method with those of other methods of teaching



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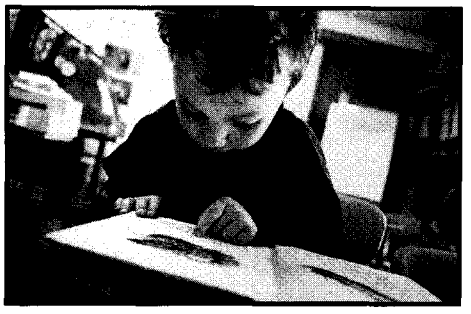
reading, and the conclusions are contradictory, at best. A 1989 overview paper in the *Review of Educational Research* found that the scanty whole-language research and the more extensive studies on its predecessor, the "language experience" approach, when taken together, show that they produced somewhat worse results in reading comprehension and worse results with disadvantaged students than traditional methods did. A similar 1991 University of Maryland survey, published this fall in *Educational Psychologist*, looked at whole-language research and found that most of the studies examined demonstrated no difference in outcomes—but also were too poorly designed to have much validity in any event. (There are exceptions: Penny Freppon, at the University of Cincinnati, for example, has done credible controlled studies that seem to support the idea that whole language can affect some reading measurements.)

The federal government, philanthropic foundations, and universities have sponsored other major studies on reading. Though these were not intended to compare whole language and phonics, the findings have been generally supportive of the intensive phonics programs derided by whole-language proponents. Low-income and slow students appear to benefit especially from explicit phonics instruction. These findings have been summarized in such reports as *The Great Debate*, by the Harvard education professor Jeanne Chall, the Commission on Reading's *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, and a 1990 report sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, *Beginning to Read*, by the psychologist Marilyn Adams. This last report concludes that

> the vast majority of [program comparison] studies indicated that approaches including intensive, explicit phonics resulted in comprehension skills that are at least comparable to, and word recognition and spelling skills that are significantly better than those that do not.

Phonics alone, of course, is not sufficient to promote strong reading skills. As Adams emphasized in *Beginning to Read*, children need both direct skills instruction and exposure to interesting reading.

Adams's report sought and found common ground between the whole-language and phonics camps—but it didn't heal the rift between the extremists. Those partial to phonics are not, for the most part, the ones who have proved intransigent. At a meeting of the International Reading Association four years ago, for instance, Ken Goodman attacked Adams as a "vampire" who threatened the literacy of America's youth. Constance Weaver, of Western Michigan University, and other whole-language proponents question the reliability of pro-phonics research. Indeed, many whole-language advocates don't accept conventional standards of proof, and criticize virtually any reading test for being an artificial assessment of a narrow set of skills. Professor Carole Edelsky, of Arizona State University, in a widely discussed paper in *Educational Researcher*, rejected calls for rigorous quantitative or test-score-based research on the whole-language approach as an "outrageous" effort to impose an old "paradigm" on the movement. "Test-score evidence doesn't tell you what students actually do when they read," Edelsky argues. She and others favor a qualitative approach called "kid-watching," which uses such devices as free-form essays and portfolios that measure student progress over time—evaluation tools that are gaining mainstream acceptance. But many of the movement leaders remain hostile to controlled studies or other concrete measures of proof.



There have been troubling reports from the field about whole language. Reading scores of first-graders in San Diego dropped by about half when whole language was introduced there in 1990. One school-board member complained to the *San Diego Union*, "From parents I get lines like, 'You're experimenting with my kid.' I hope we didn't make a mistake—but I feel in my gut that we have."

In Houston in the fall of 1991, eight inner-city elementary schools asked the school district to allow them to return to phonics-based instruction after a few years of trying a whole-language-style program. "Last year's reading scores were the lowest in twenty years," LaSalle Donnell, the principal of Houston's Douglass Elementary School, said at the time. "If the kids can't decipher words, they can't enjoy a whole-language program." During the 1992–1993 school year, after an intensive phonics program was adopted, the school's scores on a state reading test rose an astonishing 48 points. At that time 98 percent of third-graders were reading at or above grade level, and the school's reading scores are still among the best in the city.

The most disturbing reports have come from urban school districts with significant numbers of low-income and minority students (not particularly surprising, given the studies showing that disadvantaged students do worse in programs that make little use of phonics), in large measure because, unlike most middle-class children, they aren't getting much letter-sound instruction at home. Yet there are some signs that even middle-class students, who often have received informal tutoring in phonics from their parents, may suffer in certain whole-language classrooms.

For this reason the tale of the Cape Elizabeth, Maine, schools merits attention. For about five years a whole-language program—without any systematic phonics instruction at all before third grade—was offered in this small middle-class suburb. Then some parents began complaining that their younger children weren't reading as well as their older ones had. A new superintendent, Constance Goldman, responded to those concerns by conducting district-wide standardized testing for second-grade students in 1991. The tests, although given several months

A few promising programs have combined quick phonics instruction with whole-language-style activities.

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earlier than usual, offered a worrisome, if rough, snapshot of students in trouble: 42 percent of the second-graders read below grade level, a far higher proportion of low-scoring students than in comparable communities. Goldman, disturbed by the results, moved to create a more balanced curriculum, keeping elements of the whole-language philosophy but adding more direct skills instruction. Reading scores improved. "At some point you have to set standards," she says now.

IF questions can be raised about an exclusive reliance on the whole-language method in practice, it should not be surprising that they can also be raised about it in theory.

Since the 1960s Ken Goodman and Frank Smith, for many years a psychology professor at the University of Victoria, in British Columbia, have argued that skillful reading involves getting meaning largely from the context of the entire passage, rather than reading word by word. By sampling words and parts of words, readers engage in a "psycholinguistic guessing game" that enables them to predict the words they'll encounter. Sounding out words plays only a small role, Goodman and Smith say, because it's too cumbersome for the human mind to process every letter and every word.

Given this theory, the playing down of phonics and the emphasis on guessing words makes a kind of sense. But in the two decades since the whole-language philosophy first became influential in academic circles, a considerable amount of research has been published showing Goodman's and Smith's psycholinguistic theories to be wrong. Here is a brief survey.

• Contrary to the whole-language belief that readers "sample" text, skillful readers actually read virtually every word and every letter of the texts they encounter. That's the basic conclusion of computer-monitored eye-movement research by Keith Rayner, of the University of Massachusetts, and other scholars. Skilled readers are able to breeze through texts effortlessly because their knowledge of phonics has made word recognition automatic—thus freeing their minds to focus on meaning.

• The critical reading ability is word identification, rather than the use of context to figure out words. Charles Perfetti, of the University of Pittsburgh, for instance, has shown that readers who perform poorly when reading words out of context also do poorly at reading comprehension. "The skilled reader has such automatic facility at identifying words that he doesn't need context," says Frank Vellutino, the director of the Child Research and Study Center at the University of Albany. Philip Gough, of the University of Texas, has found that even skilled readers correctly guess no more than one in four words missing from a text. Whole language's emphasis on context was undermined in a different way in December of 1991, when the *Journal of Educational Psychology* published a study challenging an oft-cited 1965 experiment by Ken Goodman. The original experiment had found that children made 60 to 80 percent more errors when reading words out of context than when reading them in context. But Tom Nicholson, a senior lecturer in education at the University of Waikato, in New Zealand, repeated

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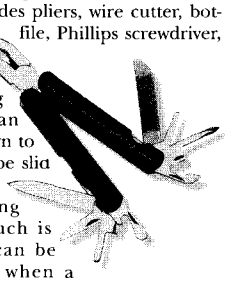

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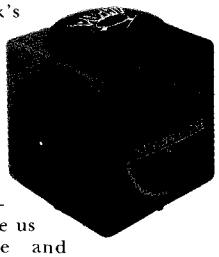

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Goodman's work and determined that Goodman had failed to distinguish properly between good and poor readers; it was only the younger and poorer readers who made significantly more errors reading words out of context.

• Understanding letter-sound correspondences is indispensable to skilled reading. Frank Smith has argued, "To the fluent reader, the alphabetic principle is completely irrelevant." In fact Jeanne Chall, of Harvard, and other researchers have demonstrated that two powerful predictors of future reading success are a knowledge of the alphabet and an awareness of the speech sounds that make up words—the very skills that are often lacking in disadvantaged students when they enter first grade.

Research of this kind, though, hasn't prompted whole-language theorists or their followers to modify their beliefs. Goodman argues that researchers in the phonics camp use short written passages and artificial settings that do not reflect real-world conditions. "They can play games in the laboratory," he says, "but teachers know that that's not the way people read." Frank Smith dismisses most of the computer-based research on thinking and reading as "irrelevant and misleading."

WHATEVER its limitations, the whole-language approach does have something to offer. Its stress on reading enjoyable children's literature rather than dull primers is surely worthwhile (though little more than common sense). Whole language also offers a supportive and tolerant atmosphere in which to learn to read. The emphasis on early writing wins broad support among the various reading factions, because it can help improve reading and thinking skills.

For its part, traditional phonics instruction also has limitations. Although the use of genuine literature and writing assignments in schools has grown, a majority of classrooms still devote too much of their reading-instruction time to simplistic workbooks and mind-numbing drills. Learning phonics this way is dull and time-consuming. Equally dubious is the widely advertised "Hooked on Phonics" program, which promises miracles for beginning readers, young and old alike. In 1991 a panel of reading experts questioned the effectiveness of this method, since it concentrates on teaching letter sounds without offering any meaningful reading.

Fortunately, a few promising programs have combined quick, accessible phonics instruction with whole-language-style activities. Perhaps the clearest demonstration that children benefit from such a combination is a program for troubled readers called Reading Recovery, designed by the New Zealand educator Marie Clay. For thirty minutes a day over an average of sixteen weeks, a specially trained teacher works with children individually to build their confidence by exposing them to short, charming, gradually more difficult books; mini-lessons in writing; and magnetic letters that the children play with to form words. The program is widely used in Ohio, Illinois, California, Texas, and New York, among other places. Early research showed that roughly 85 percent of Reading Recovery graduates were reading at levels comparable to their peers' up to three years later—a rate of success that no other remedial program comes close to matching.

Reading Recovery costs a few thousand dollars per child, but its eclectic principles could be applied less expensively across entire classrooms. Unfortunately, whole-language extremists aren't eager to let that happen. The program itself, admittedly, has been embraced by both phonics and whole-language advocates, with the latter being particularly likely to cite Reading Recovery's success as another example of their achievements. But Marie Clay says, "No, this isn't part of whole language." The truth that whole-language purists don't want to admit is that Reading Recovery's success is due to its shrewd combination of teaching strategies from different pedagogical camps, including the use of phonics. So they deride those who are trying to forge just such a blend of methods. "It's asinine," Ken Goodman says. "We're not going to solve anything by trying a little of this and a little of that."

But it may be exactly that diverse approach that stands the best chance of creating classroom after classroom in which everyone can read.

We are grateful to the staff of The Cambridge Friends School for allowing our photographer to take pictures of a combined first- and second-grade class.

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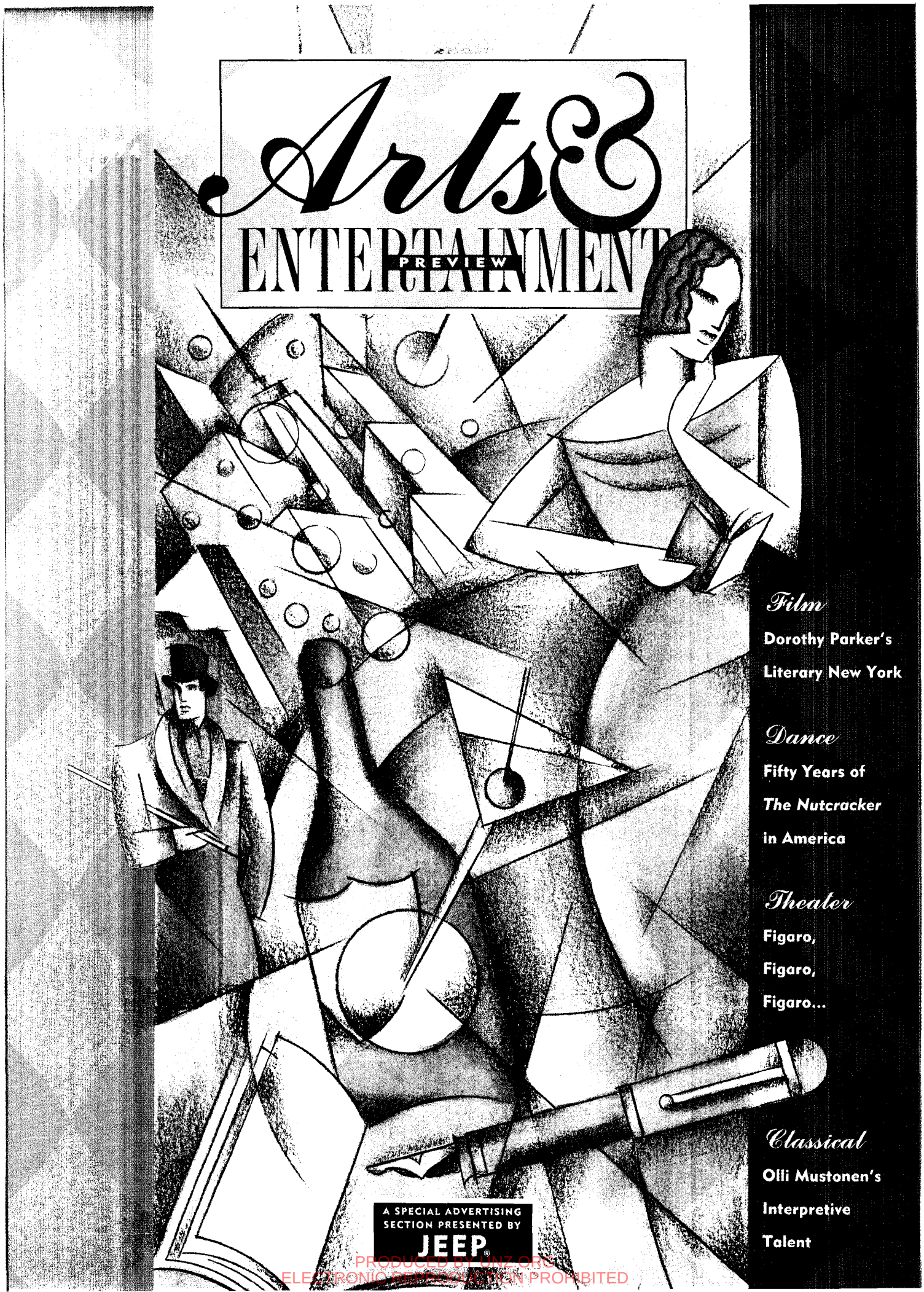
Arts & Entertainment

PREVIEW



Film

Dorothy Parker's Literary New York

Dance

Fifty Years of *The Nutcracker* in America

Theater

Figaro, Figaro, Figaro...

Classical

Olli Mustonen's Interpretive Talent

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Film

BY ELLA TAYLOR

LIVES AND LOVES OF WITS AND POETS

JOYCE RUDOLPH

Leigh brings Mrs. Parker to life

"She was one of the wittiest people in the world and one of the saddest," wrote Brendan Gill, introducing *The Portable Dorothy Parker.* There's more sadness than wit in Alan Rudolph's great-looking, wistful biopic of the Algonquin Round Table's famous wag—understandable, given that Parker's disastrous love life makes better movie copy than her writing, but reductive. In *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle,* Jennifer Jason Leigh overcooks Parker's twenties twang, but otherwise brings an enchanting blend of pathos, bravado, and gallantry to the troubled writer whose unconsummated love, the movie implies, for Robert Benchley (played with pregnant restraint by Campbell Scott) left her at the mercy of a parade of unavailable bounders. A disciple of Robert Altman's, Rudolph plays to his strengths as an ensemble director—the movie fairly sings in its Algonquin scenes, with the camera tracking giddily around a table full of wisecracking egos (played by Matthew Broderick and such up-and-comers as Gwyneth Paltrow and James LeGros) from an era when stardom came from spewing one-liners while drinking oneself into a stupor.

Less artful, but affecting despite its lugubrious period realism, is Brian Gilbert's *Tom and Viv,* about the calamitous marriage between T. S. Eliot (Willem Dafoe) and Vivienne Haigh-Wood (Miranda Richardson). The movie is saved from terminal unction by Richardson's rip-roaring performance as the wife whose misdiagnosed hormonal ailment turned her into an out-of-control manic depressive and allowed her husband the poet to indulge his gift for splendid long-suffering.

MIRAMAX FILMS

Dafoe and Richardson wax poetic

WHOSE CHILD IS THIS?

In 1966 the British director Ken Loach made *Cathy Come Home,* a lacerating television drama about homelessness which had all England quarreling about the state's role in perpetuating urban misery. How depressing that his new film may do the same in 1994. Based on a true story and filmed with documentary *verité, Ladybird, Ladybird* features a stunning performance by Liverpudlian comedienne Crissy Rock as Maggie, a single mother whose own childhood is horribly replicated when her four children, after witnessing a boyfriend slap their mother around, are removed by Social Services. Maggie begins a new life with Jorge (Vladimir Vega), a gentle Paraguayan immigrant; but as they try to retrieve her children and create a family of their own, they sink ever deeper into the heedless, condemning bureaucracy of the welfare apparatus. Maggie's desperately short fuse and her complete inability to play the system present the tragic proposition that her legacy of abuse as a child, aggravated by the inelasticity of the agency that's meant to help her overcome it, threatens to turn her into what the welfare officers call her—an unfit mother who truly loves her children. *Ladybird, Ladybird* is a Christmas release that will break your heart. So it should.

THE SAMUEL GOLDWYN COMPANY

A mother vs. the state

TEEN SPIRITS

Filmmakers often wilt into reverent realism when they take on fact-based movies. Not Peter Jackson, a New Zealander who plays with the boundaries between verisimilitude and imaginative truth. Jackson's new film, *Heavenly Creatures,* which wowed critics enough to carry off the Media Award at this year's Toronto Film Festival, is based on a 1952 murder case in which two schoolgirls, Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme, conspired to kill Pauline's mother in the hope of avoiding separation. At once prankish and moving, the film tells the girls' story as a parable of love gone wrong between two outsiders. Juliet (Kate Winslet), a smart-mouthed poor little rich girl from England who's cursed with callously neglectful parents, bonds with the dowdy, shy but intelligent Pauline (Melanie Lynskey). The more the girls' parents, disturbed by the homoerotic intensity of their friendship, try to pry them apart, the more they retreat into a florid fantasy world populated by avenging princes and princesses. Each jacks up the other's obsessive imagination until they abolish the line between reality and desire—as does Jackson in gorgeous fantasy sequences filled with digitally manipulated clay figures and featuring—hilariously—the girls' idols, Mario Lanza and Orson Welles. Jackson didn't know it when he began shooting the film, but Juliet, who disappeared into England after her release from prison, resurfaced with a new identity as the best-selling mystery writer Anne Perry.

PIERRE VINET

Ethereal girl

PIERRE VINET

Lynskey and Winslet in *Heavenly Creatures*

Ella Taylor is a film columnist for Mirabella.

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN MARTINEZ

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Dance and Theater

BY AUSTIN BAER AND LAURA JACOBS

SUITE CELEBRATION

One of the most horrible assignments I ever accepted was to write an encyclopedia entry on "*The Nutcracker* in the West." Not only have there been countless versions in this century, but the ballet itself dribbled into Western consciousness in odd bits and pieces. In 1911, for instance, Nijinsky danced to the Sugar Plum Fairy's celesta music in a production of—go figure—*Swan Lake.* Because of the huge impact George Balanchine's 1954 *Nutcracker* made on the dance world, many people think Balanchine staged the first complete production in America. He didn't. That honor belongs to Willam Christensen and the San Francisco Ballet. In 1944 Christensen staged a full-length *Nutcracker*—without ever having seen one himself. Ever resourceful, Christensen wrote to the Library of Congress for a copy of the musical score, and received choreographic input from Alexandra Danilova and Balanchine, who spent an evening with him detailing their memories of the ballet's 1892 premiere at the Maryinsky Theater in St. Petersburg. Danilova even danced the female roles for Christensen, right there in the living room (a nice interior echo of *Nutcracker*'s Act I).

MARTY SOHL

The San Francisco Ballet's *Nutcracker*

This season the San Francisco Ballet celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its first *Nutcracker.* Over the years, of course, the company has updated and redesigned its production: the current version, dating from 1987, is also the fourth. It still includes Christensen's original Act I party scene (which he tinkered with in '87) and its Little Buffoons, but it also boasts new Act II divertissements by the current company director, Helgi Tomasson. (December 13–31, War Memorial Opera House; call 415-703-9400.) Consult your local newspaper for information on *Nutcrackers* near you—they're everywhere. **—L.J.**

AT THE STILL POINT, WHERE THE DANCE MOVES

Bill T. Jones makes a powerful impression standing still. With his oak-solid yet rippling musculature and his acorn-smooth head, he could be a mahogany shaman, or one of Frida Kahlo's wary innocents. Moving, however, he has never struck me as a natural dancer. His choreography is like a second, strained language, complete with spaces of silence, stalls of meaning. Jones, I think, likes it that way. And in the years since his partner and lover, Arnie Zane, died of AIDS, and since Jones announced his own HIV-positive status, he's been making the gaps work for him—the imponderables are his stomping ground. *Still/Here* is Jones's latest trip to the undiscovered country, a dance dialogue that explores terminal illness and life in its shadow. Continuing its American tour, *Still/Here* stops at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (November 30–December 3), and moves on to Portland, Oregon (January 13–15); Lawrence, Kansas (January 25); and Seattle; Columbus, Ohio; and Berkeley, California, in February. **—L.J.**

JOANNE SAVIO

Bill T. Jones in *Still/Here*

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS

In keeping with the wise insight that what originates as tragedy repeats itself as farce, true sequels more often than not are tales of disillusionment. Thus at least three attempts to spin out a future for the characters of Beaumarchais's *The Marriage of Figaro* (the source for the Mozart opera) cast a jaundiced eye on the play's happy resolution. The dramatist's own *La mère coupable* (1791) is a sour and dyspeptic affair, and the recent opera *The Ghosts of Versailles* (1991), by John Corigliano and William M. Hoffman, abounds in bitter postmodernist ironies. Yet in neither of these is it the marriage of Figaro, barber and factotum extraordinaire, that runs up on the rocks. The Austrian playwright Ödön von Horváth was not so sentimental; he called his extrapolation from Beaumarchais *Figaro Gets a Divorce* (1935). This month the Yale Repertory Theatre, in New Haven, presents *Figaro/Figaro,* a single-evening adaptation of the Beaumarchais *Marriage* and the Horváth *Divorce* by Eric Overmyer, whose best-known original work (*On the Verge or The Geography of Yearning*) bears witness to a sharp mind and a tender heart—an unbeatable combination. (December 1–17; call 203-432-1234.) **—A.B.**

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York. Laura Jacobs is editor in chief of Stagebill.

BERGMAN SINGS

Musicals acquaint a man with strange bedfellows. *The Petrified Prince,* receiving its world premiere at the New York Shakespeare Festival's Joseph Papp Public Theater, filters an unfilmed screenplay by Ingmar Bergman through the lens of the prolific composer-lyricist Michael John LaChiusa, recently responsible for *Hello, Again,* based on *La Ronde,* Arthur Schnitzler's infamous daisy chain of lust in action. If this alliance sounds peculiar, remember Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music,* magically derived from the delightful *Smiles of a Summer Night,* the filmmaker's least characteristic creation. Like *Night Music,* the ribald new *Prince* is in the excellent directorial hands of another Prince: Harold, winner of an unmatched nineteen Tony Awards, now returning to off-Broadway for only the third time in his amazing career. (December 3–January 15; call 212-598-7150.) **—A.B.**

Ingmar Bergman and Harold Prince

LEFT: UPI/BETTMANN RIGHT: ELISABETH NOVICK

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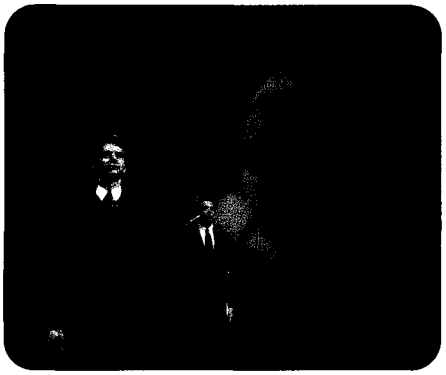
Classical Music

BY AUSTIN BAER

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

Last season the Brooklyn Academy of Music's high-profile Next Wave Festival presented a new opera called *Orphée*, in which the screenplay of Jean Cocteau's surrealist classic was set to the music of Philip Glass. Well, why not? The history of opera is rife with borrowed, retooled, and recycled libretti, and besides, the music did have some merit. Next season BAM promises *Les Enfants Terribles*, a dance drama based on another Cocteau classic, again with a new score by Glass. Well, why not? The history of dance is full of material appropriated from literature and drama, and besides, maybe Glass's as yet undetermined choreographic collaborator will come up with something worth watching. Meanwhile, here is *La Belle et la Bête*, based on the immortal Cocteau fantasy, in which a quartet of singers and an ensemble of instrumentalists perform Glass's live, poorly synchronized new musical setting of the screenplay while the film is shown with supertitles but without its own soundtrack. Well, why not? I'll tell you why not. Because it is an outrage. The actors have voices of their own. The timbres and inflections of Josette Day as the airy, sophisticated Beauty and Jean Marais (Cocteau's love and inspiration) as regular guy, prince, and bloodthirsty Beast with smoking claws weave as deeply into Cocteau's spell as their glamourous movement and appearance. How dare Glass steal their faces and then cut out their tongues? That, at all events, is the opinion in this corner after an invitational dress rehearsal last spring. Audiences in Europe, where the show has been touring ever since, have nevertheless been cheering Glass's *La Belle et la Bête* to the skies. Who's right? As always, you must judge for yourself. (December 7 and 9–11, Brooklyn Academy of Music; call 718-636-4100.)

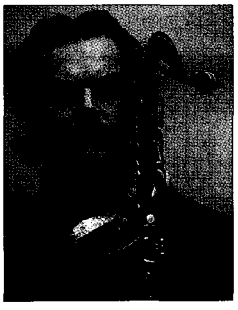


JOAN MARCUS

Dumb Beauty: Glass's *La Belle et la Bête*

NEW SOUNDS OF CENTURIES PAST

The contemplative depth and repose that contemporary listeners have been discovering of late in Gregorian chant also pervade a very dissimilar new album of uncommon interest: *Officium* (ECM New Series, distributed by BMG Classics), in which a capella singers of the Hilliard Ensemble join forces with the jazz saxophonist Jan Garbarek. Rooted in traditions separated by eight centuries, the singers and the instrumentalist breathe as one. Strict counterpoint and free, sometimes anguished improvisation combine in unrepeatable creations that seem inevitable and somehow timeless, like views of cliffs and sea under the light of moments never to be recaptured. This month the artists attempt their hypnotic experiments in live performances at St. John the Divine, New York (December 3; call 212-662-2133), St. Matthew's Cathedral, Washington, D.C. (December 5, admission free, no tickets required), and Grace Cathedral, San Francisco (December 7; call 415-445-1309).



LEFT: CAROLINE FORBES RIGHT: KNUT BRY

The Hilliard Ensemble and Jan Garbarek

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

A COMPOSER'S TOUCH

Finland's Olli Mustonen, now in his twenties, belongs to the class of musicians who show early promise as composers but make their names primarily as performers. While barely twenty, on a program that included music of his own, he was capable of playing a sequence of Bach preludes and fugues as if they were not separate pieces but an organic work: a demonstration if ever there was one of the authorial potential of an interpretive artist. An enduring souvenir of his verve at the start of his career is a set of taut, vivid, witty, and searching readings of the Stravinsky piano-violin repertoire with Isabelle van Keulen (Philips Classics). Mustonen's recent excursions on the London/Decca label show the impressive growth of a fascinating mind. His appearances this month with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 will provide another update (December 9–10; call 215-893-1999). Meanwhile, what is he writing these days?

MARK BAYLEY

Olli Mustonen

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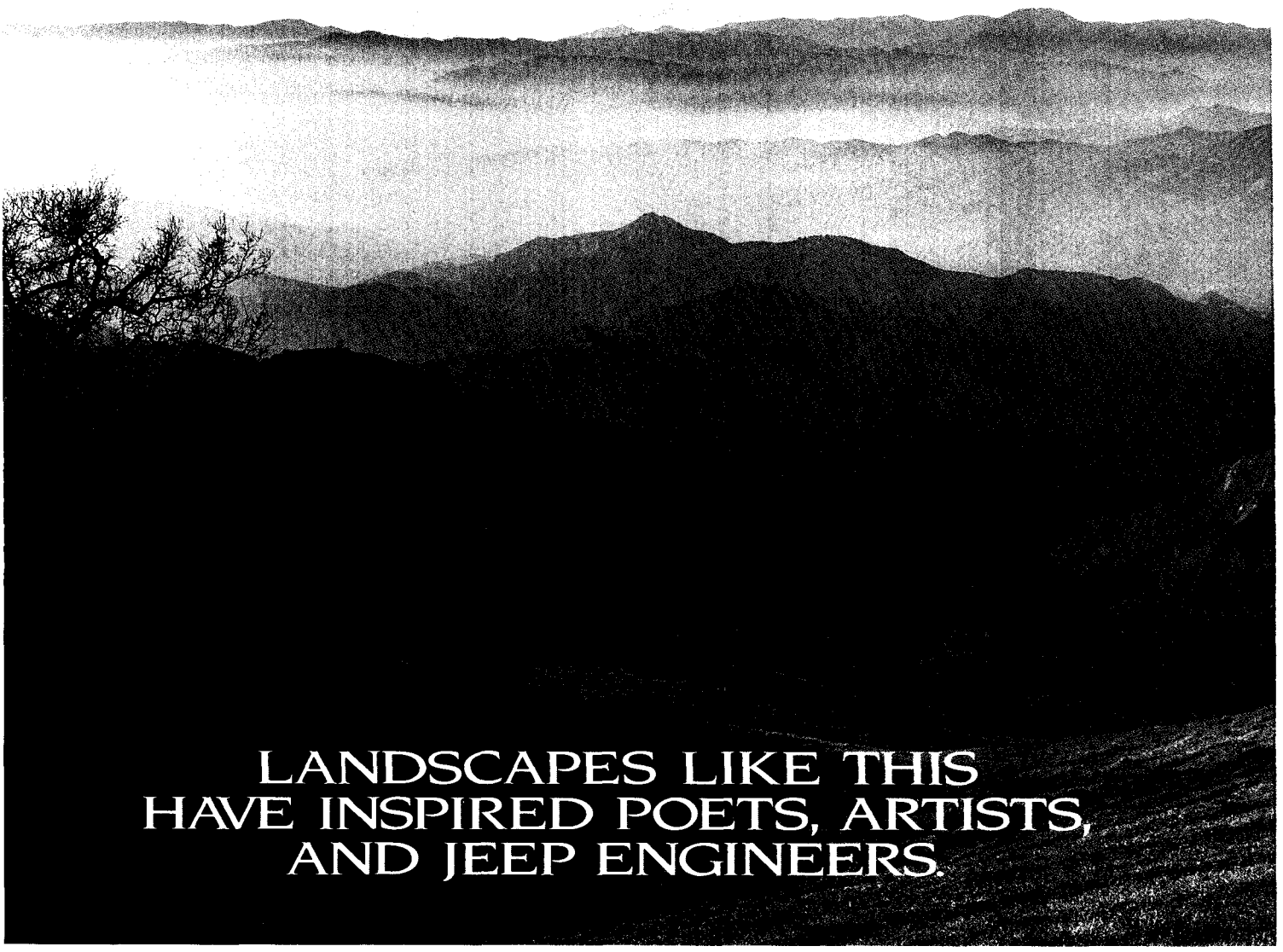

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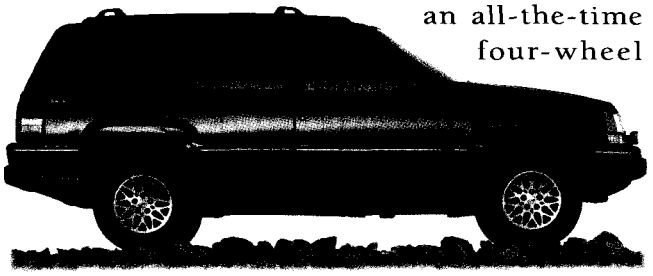

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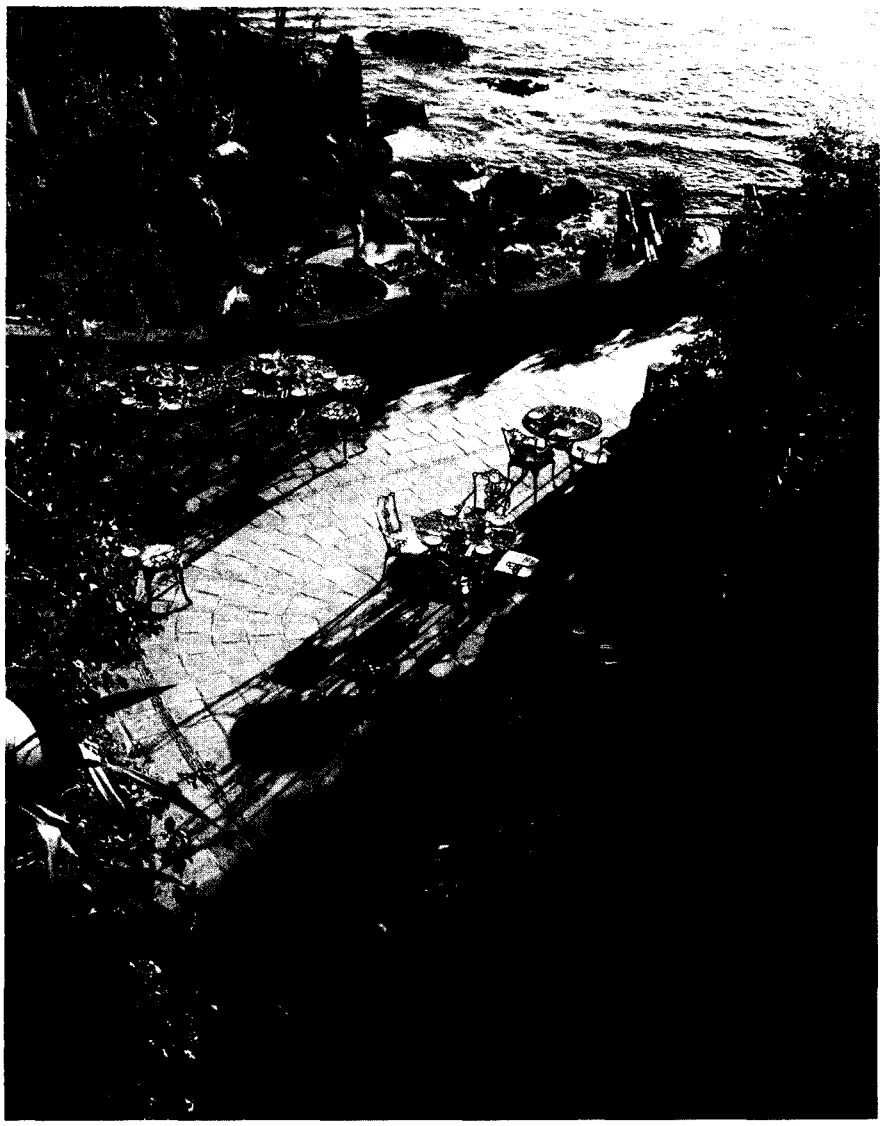

The terrace restaurant at La Casa Que Canta, Zihuatanejo

More Than a Beach

Itineraries that immerse you in Mexico's history and culture as well as its surf

by Barbara Wallraff

HOW to put this delicately, without revealing too much? A couple who are perhaps not perfectly in sync about what proportion of a winter vacation to devote to cultural pursuits and what proportion to devote to the beach can find a solution to their problem in a trip to Mexico.

I lived in Mexico some twenty years ago and spent a few months traveling around the country, and last winter I heard it calling to me. I had especially fond memories of the city of Oaxaca, and so my husband and I thought it would be a good place to start the trip that we were planning (and that the Mexican Government Tourism Office generously helped to arrange). The city of Oaxaca, in the highlands of the Sierra Madre del Sur, is the capital of the state of the same name, which sweeps west and down to the Pacific. The geography allows travelers to combine several days in ancient and colonial highland Mexico with several days in beach-resort Mexico, for a vacation that everyone can enjoy. The airlines' routes make it particularly convenient to visit Puerto Escondido, on the coast, along with Oaxaca. Or one could round out a trip to the more varied beachfront playgrounds of Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, a few hundred miles up the coast, with an excursion to the colonial city of Morelia.

THE city of Oaxaca, like Rome, is a time machine, able to transport a person not just to one period of past glory but to millennia's worth of history. From about 500 B.C. to A.D. 700 the majestic ruin Monte Albán, on an artificially flattened hilltop a few miles from what is now the center of town, was the hub of the burgeoning Zapotec civilization. Monte Albán is to my mind the most evocative ruin in Mexico. Its scale is grand and yet human. Its purpose as a downtown, where municipal and religious functions were performed, is easy to take in. And its state of preservation is fascinating, with some structures standing intact and others that will strike the unschooled observer as little more than picturesque rubble. Even these unexcavated mounds are awe-inspiring, for they lie in all directions around Monte Albán and suggest a vast city awaiting rediscovery. Indeed, according to the nonprofit Monte Albán Society, only about five percent of the site has yet been explored archaeologically.

Excavation does continue. When we visited Monte Albán last year, teams of men were busily refacing a high, ancient retaining wall. In front of them the surface was irregular and encrusted with dirt; behind them the wall was neat and new-looking, like freshly repointed brick. This worried me. It was as if I had gone to see

Photographs by Julian H. Fisher

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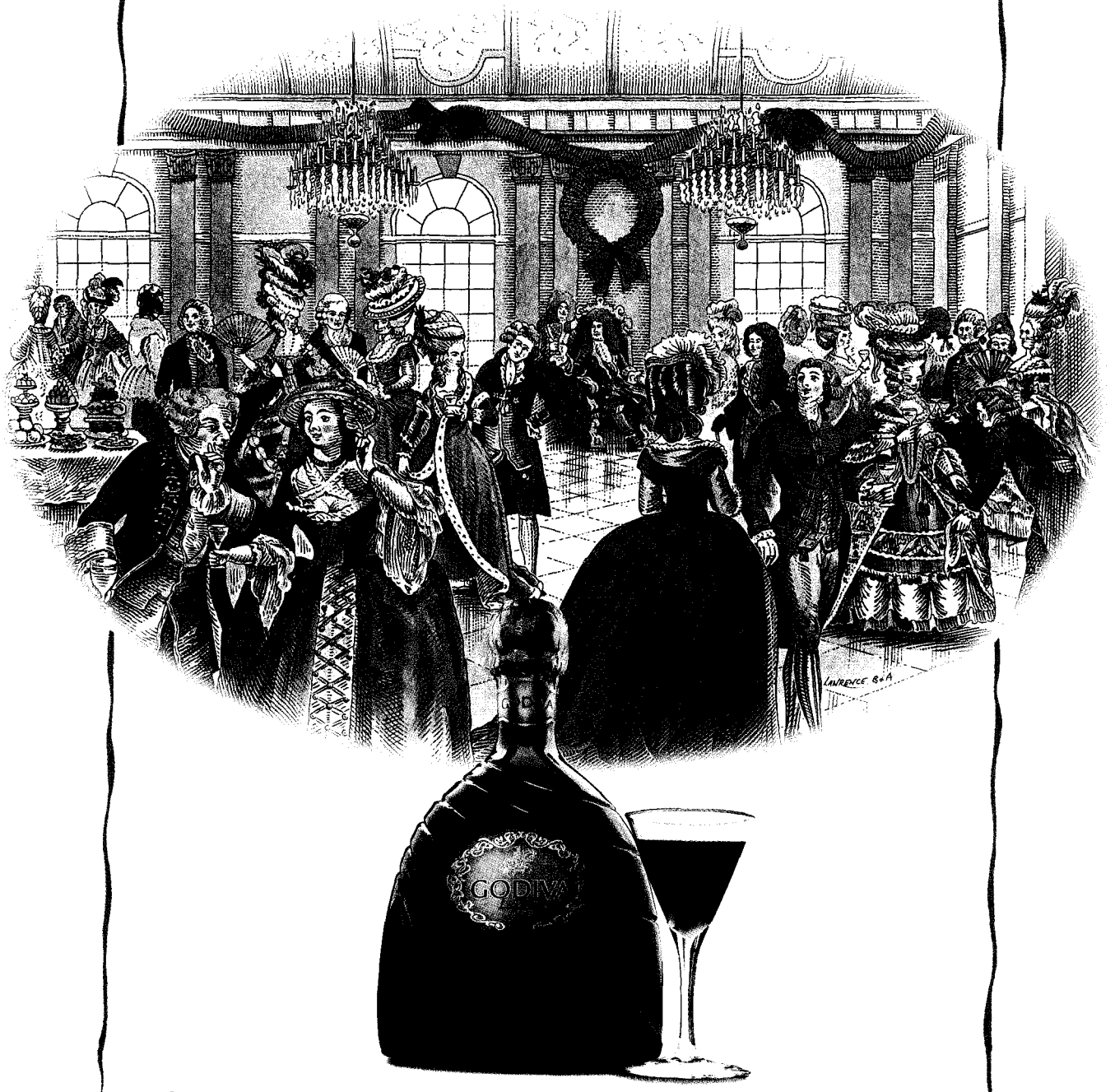

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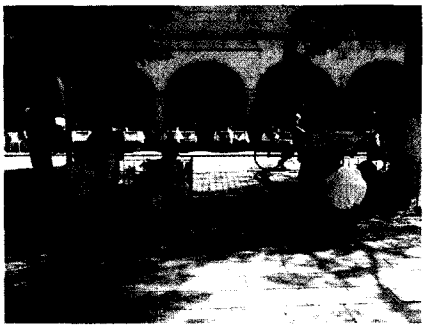
the Parthenon and found construction workers repairing the roof. Later I asked the director of the project, Marcus Winter, about this, and he explained that some repairs are being made for structural reasons and others in order to make central portions of Monte Albán more presentable for visitors. Although he admitted that some members of his profession might disagree, he said, "From an archaeological point of view, there is nothing to worry about as long as we document all interventions." The work has also included a precise mapping of the site, some new excavation of the ruins, and expansion of the on-site museum and visitors' center. The project was completed this past October, leaving Monte Albán well tended and more accessible than ever.

To go back in time a mere three or four hundred years—the Spanish colonial era—one need only return to the center of town. The city of Oaxaca was founded in 1532 by the Spaniards, who laid out a spacious *zócalo*, or main plaza, at its heart and then got busy building churches, monasteries, a Roman-style aqueduct, and various handsome stone buildings, many of which remain. In 1987 Oaxaca was named a World Heritage Site, a designation that not only carries symbolic importance but also tends to bring funding for preservation.

The legacy of colonial times is apparent, too, in the small towns nearby. Driving out into the countryside to visit ruins and Indian markets, I was again and again amazed to see the bright domes and towers of churches every ten kilometers or so. An impressive church at Mitla lies cheek by jowl with another important group of Zapotec ruins. It was here that the remarkable continuity of the region came home to me, as I stood among the ruins looking across at the church and at the surrounding Indian town of Mitla, where a satellite dish poked up into my line of sight.



The colonial era is a wonderful one not only to roam through but also to dwell in (now that it's over): Oaxaca's finest hotel is the Camino Real Oaxaca, whose sixteenth-century building was originally a convent (it was long called El Convento, and then El Presidente; recently it was sold again). The hotel consists of two stories of rooms opening on a seemingly endless series of courtyards. Here's one with a dainty tile walkway through it; here's one with a fountain, one with a rose garden, a swimming pool, a gazebo. At every turn there are frescoes and shrines, statues and trees, archways and urns, for the most part in a state of voluptuous, lovely dishevelment. Shockingly expensive by Oaxacan standards, the Camino Real Oaxaca is not bad by American ones: rooms go for $145 to $200 a night. I wouldn't recommend the minimum-price rooms—they seem to be noisy and airless. And even at the higher prices one mustn't expect air-conditioning, a lavish bathroom, or, unfortunately, better than adequate service (though perhaps the new management has improved this). It is for the magical architecture and the sense of history that one stays here—or comes for lunch and a look around.

I don't know what year the time machine is set for in the Indian markets, but it's not 1994. Each day of the week a market is held somewhere in the Oaxaca area, and most have a section catering to tourists, where vendors sell the attractive local handicrafts, such as folkloric clothes, rugs, and black or green ceramics. The Saturday market at the Central de Abastos, in Oaxaca itself, is the largest, and was my favorite, even though I came away empty-handed. Under tarpaulins slung just above the local people's heads an entire commercial city had sprung to life for the day. In the center of the market was a sort of open-air lunchroom, smoky from cooking fires, where hot meals were sold. Elsewhere aprons and handbags, fragrant cilantro and chiles, dishes and baskets and plastic buckets and tin pails, live turkeys, tomatoes, machine parts, and music cassettes were stacked or mounded or jumbled in crowded stalls. The place teemed, yet no one shouted or pushed.

In particular I loved watching the grave and graceful women going about their business. Women predominate among the markets' buyers and sellers both. They wear a virtual uniform: a simple, sliplike dress under an embroidered apron, with strips of matching cloth twined into their long braids.

Oaxaca from top: a handicrafts shop, the central market, and the zócalo

The state of Oaxaca is just northwest of Chiapas, and is almost as heavily Indian as that troubled place. I saw militant slogans painted on walls and even a political demonstration in the *zócalo*, but the city appeared generally middle-class and prosperous. The towns nearby did not, nor did the people in the market, who had for the most part come from those towns. No place in the highlands, though, seemed even faintly threatening. In fact, I often felt that the time machine was set for the Norman Rockwell era, as I watched shopgirls walking arm in arm, waiters leaning down to converse with children, and boys preening for their girlfriends.

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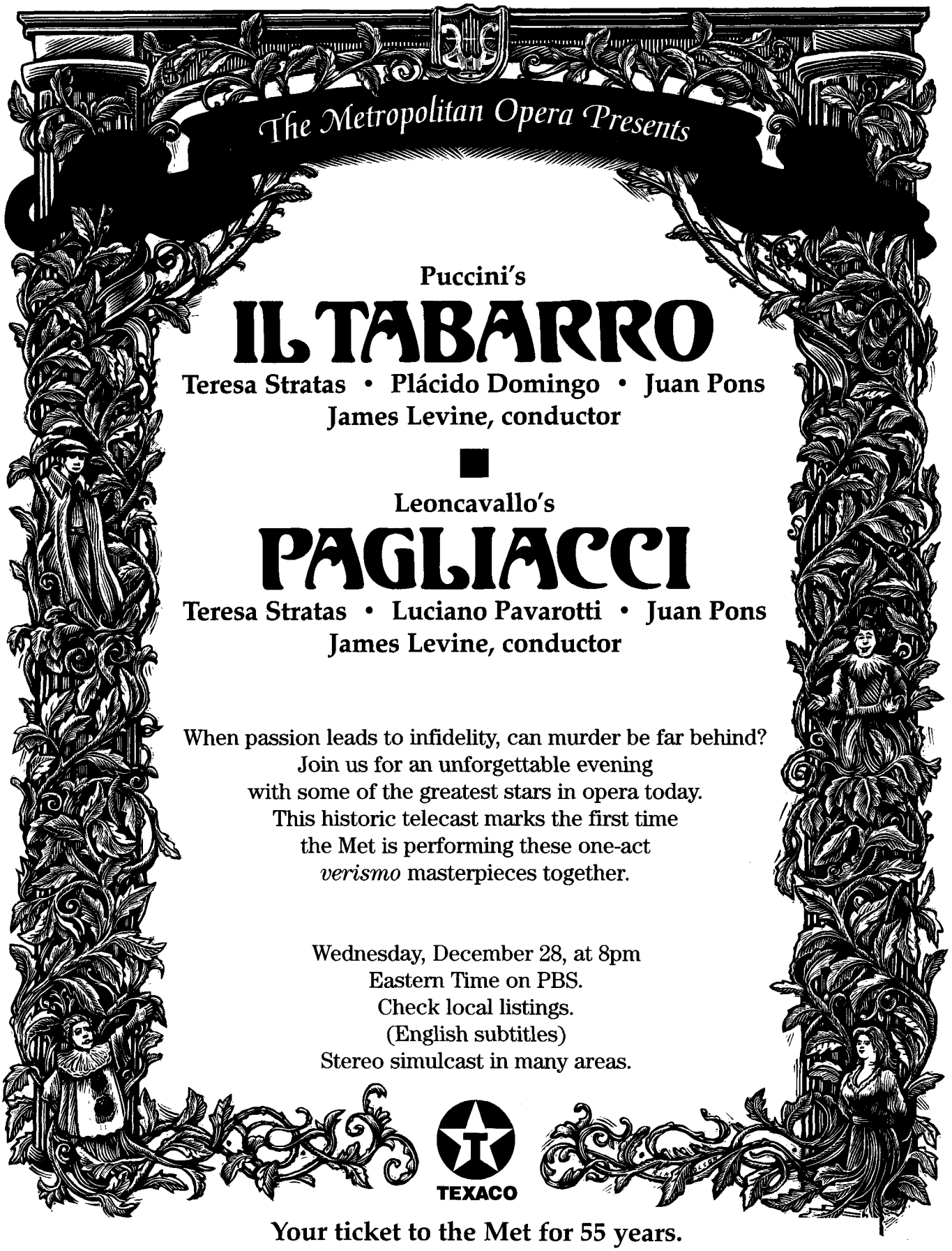

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We wanted to drive to the coast, and so, of course, we had rented a car. Renting a car has its advantages, but throughout Mexico it's very expensive, and it's nerve-wracking, too, because of a national penchant for individualistic driving, and because the roads are riddled with *topes*, or speed bumps, at short and irregular intervals. Surely most visitors would be better off flying between cities. An hour or so in the air will get you from the city of Oaxaca to Puerto Escondido, the largest beach town in the state of Oaxaca.

The reason to go to Puerto Escondido is the little Hotel Santa Fe, where we stayed, just across the street from Marineros and Zicatela beaches. A Moorish-accented fantasy of curving tile staircases and small balconies, many of which overlook the swimming pool, it is charming, casual in style, and hospitable. What's more, it has what is widely acknowledged to be the best restaurant in town. Until it was time to order dinner, we relaxed in creaky Mexican leather chairs in the open air, under a thatched roof, watching the sun set beyond the surf and eating freshly fried tortilla chips with a searing green sauce. At length we were ready for snapper a la veracruzana; each of us received a whole, nicely cooked fish under a blanket of fresh tomatoes whose spicy flavorings included martini olives. I ate every bite except for the tail and the head, which I slipped to the restaurant's tabby cat.

Puerto Escondido is a real fishing town, not yet made over in tourism's image. It and the nearby village of Puerto Angel, about which the less said the better, left me wondering whether authenticity is the Holy Grail that so many travelers believe it to be. Although Puerto Escondido would seem to be pleasantly sited, facing several broad beaches, some of these are lined with decrepit shacks, and others have an undertow that makes them unsuitable for swimming. Signs in the rooms of the Hotel Santa Fe warn visitors not to walk on the beaches at night—there have been robberies in recent years. Puerto Escondido is worth visiting for the Hotel Santa Fe, but virtually the only good reason to set foot outside the hotel grounds is to join an excursion to the nearby Lagunas de Chacagua National Park, known for its rich and varied wildlife.

FIVE days in Oaxaca and two days in Puerto Escondido would make a delightful week. Those who would rather spend the majority of the week at the beach should look north and west, to Zihuatanejo.

In beach towns choosing a hotel has special importance. Pick the wrong one and you'll feel resentful and trapped. We were happy at the beachfront Villa del Sol, which fifteen years ago was in more or less the position that the Hotel Santa Fe is in now, being the only hotel in its town worth going out of your way for. Today Zihuatanejo has two other fine small hotels as well, and both it and its sister town, Ixtapa, just up the coast, are generally enjoying a touristic boom.

At first I was envious of the guests of La Casa Que Canta, one of the other two hotels, near the Villa del Sol but perched high above the beach on a rocky promontory. We strolled over late one afternoon to have a drink and were almost literally stunned by the hotel's appearance. La Casa Que Canta looks art-directed rather than decorated, in a style as Mediterranean as it is Mexican, relying heavily on handicrafts and terra-cotta. A silver-haired tycoon in wraparound sunglasses was taking his ease in a corner of the main swimming pool; he seemed to me to embody the spirit of the place.

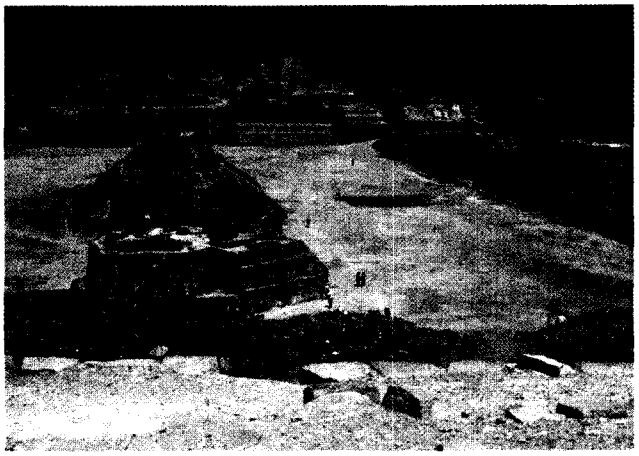
The third hotel is Puerto Mío, on the other side of the bay. The dinner we had there was one of the most memorable meals of the trip. This was partly because the food—fettucine with shrimp to start and then tender tuna, grilled medium rare as requested, in a succulent green sauce—was so good, and partly because the outdoor restaurant's setting, in a dramatic cove, with torches lighting up the rocks at night, is unbeatable.

But I came to be glad we were staying at the Villa del Sol, the homiest and most comfortable of the three hotels, and the only one at which guests can walk straight out from their rooms onto the beach. The Villa del Sol is watchfully managed by its owner, Helmut W. Leins, once an engineer in Germany but now reveling in his role as a sophisticated hotelier who can chat in any of four languages with his employees, guests, French wife, and little daughter. Floating in the calm sea one day and studying the hotel's sinuous architecture from that perspective, I thought its palm trees and thatched *palapas*, or beach huts, looked like symbiotic species. The Villa del Sol is what most beach resorts strive to be.

Staying in Zihuatanejo, one can enjoy any water sport, or go into town to have lunch and poke around in the shops, or ride over to Ixtapa, where the big hotels are, including the notable terra-cotta-colored Westin Brisas—like La Casa Que Canta writ large. Four or five days pass effortlessly. And then one can take a short flight to Morelia, a handsome colonial city less touristic than Oaxaca but, like it, surrounded by Indian towns.

We didn't have time to visit Morelia on this trip. And I wish we'd had more time to explore Zihuatanejo, and the towns around Oaxaca too. Ah, well. That's how I know I've had a good time—from start to finish.

Above, the church at Mitla, and below, an overview of Monte Albán



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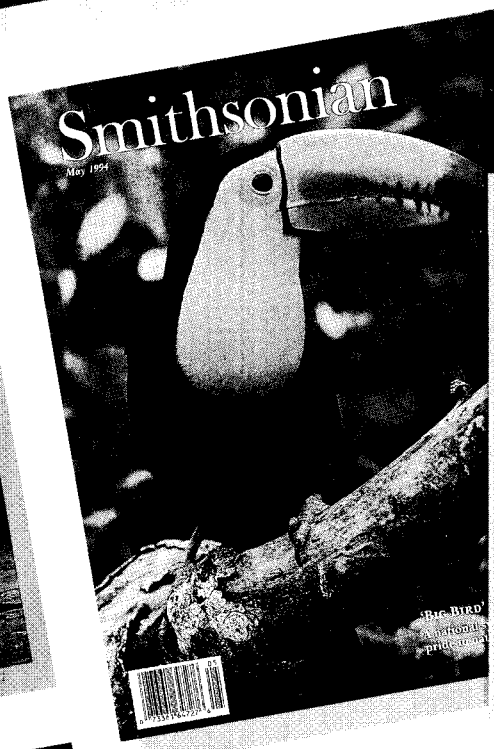

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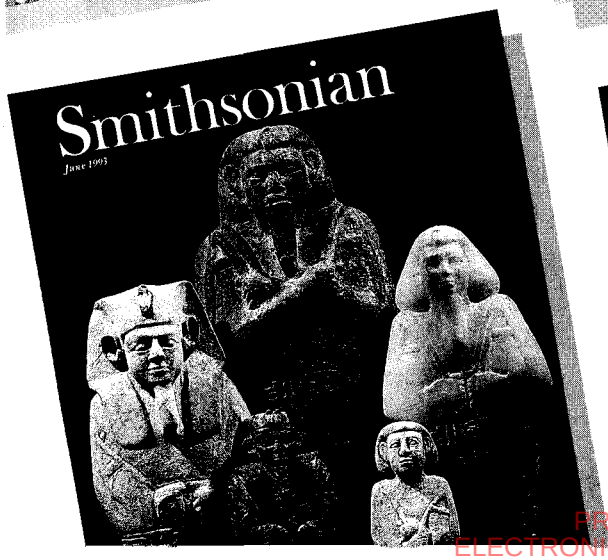

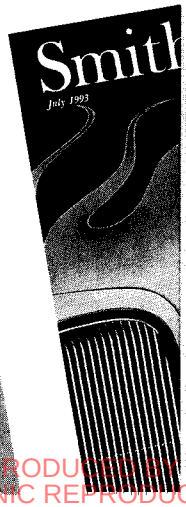

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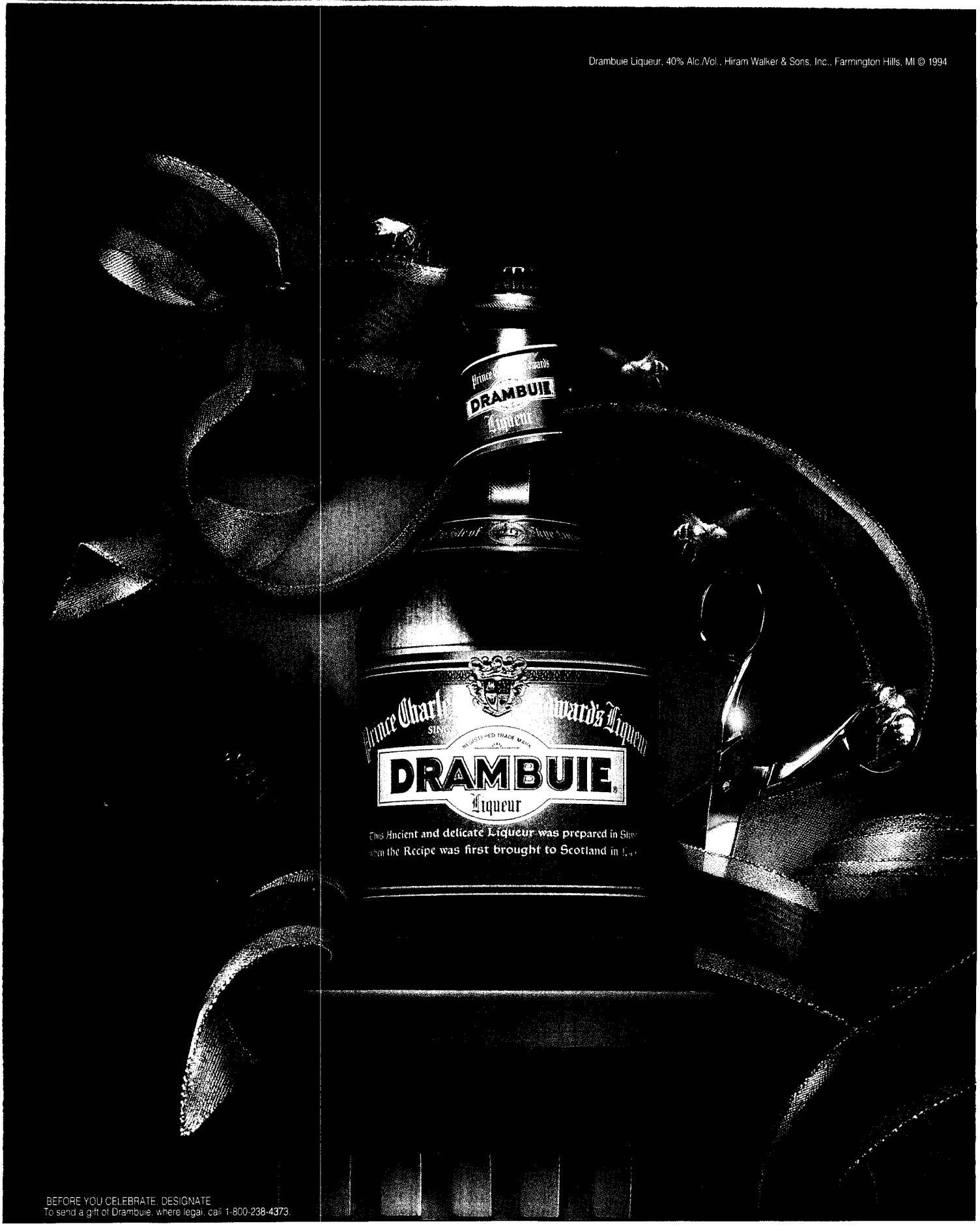

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Must It Be THE REST Against THE WEST?

by MATTHEW CONNELLY AND PAUL KENNEDY

"Now, stretching over that empty sea, aground some fifty yards out, [lay] the incredible fleet from the other side of the globe, the rusty, creaking fleet that the old professor had been eyeing since morning. . . . He pressed his eye to the glass, and the first things he saw were arms. . . . Then he started to count. Calm and unhurried. But it was like trying to count all the trees in the forest, those arms raised high in the air, waving and shaking together, all outstretched toward the nearby shore. Scraggy branches, brown and black, quickened by a breath of hope. All bare, those fleshless Gandhi-arms. . . . thirty thousand creatures on a single ship!"

—THE CAMP OF THE SAINTS

WELCOME to the 300-page narrative of Jean Raspail's disturbing, chilling, futuristic novel *The Camp of the Saints*, first published in Paris twenty-one years ago and translated into English a short while later. Set at some vague time—perhaps fifteen or twenty years—in the future, the novel describes the pilgrimage of a million desperate Indians who, forsaking the ghastly conditions of downtown Calcutta and surrounding villages, commandeer an armada of decrepit ships and set off for the French Riviera. The catalyst for this irruption is simple enough. Moved by accounts of widespread famine across an Indian subcontinent collapsing under the sheer weight of its fast-growing population, the Belgian government has decided to admit and adopt a number of young children; but the policy is reversed when tens of thousands of mothers begin to push their babies against the Belgian consul general's gates in Calcutta. After mobbing the building in disgust at Belgium's change of mind, the crowd is further inflamed by a messianic speech from one of their number, an untouchable, a gaunt, eye-catching "turd eater," who calls for the poor and wretched of the world to advance upon the Western paradise: "The nations are rising from the four corners of the earth," Raspail has the man say, "and their number is like the sand of the sea. They will march up over the broad earth and surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city. . . ." Storming on board every ship within range, the crowds force the crews to take them on a lengthy, horrific voyage, around Africa and through the Strait of Gibraltar to the southern shores of France.

Absent major changes in North-South relations, the wretched should inherit the earth by about 2025

Illustrations by C. F. Payne

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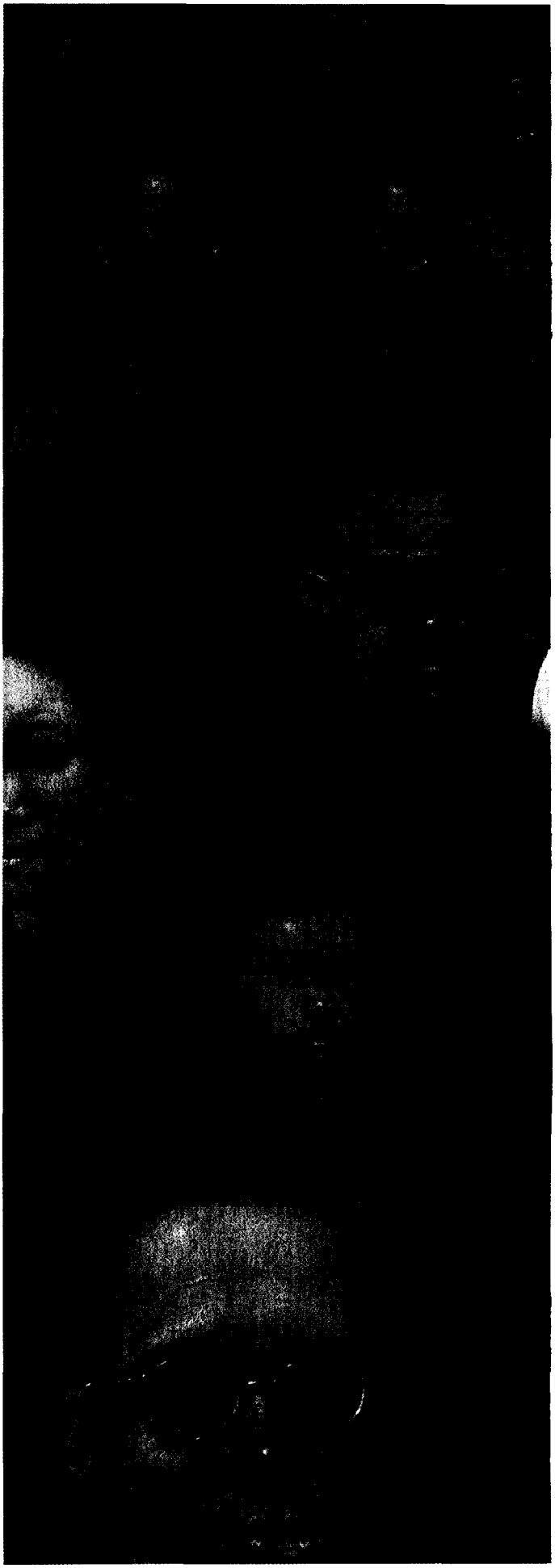
But it is not the huddled mass of Indians, with their "fleshless Gandhi-arms," that is the focus of Raspail's attention so much as the varied responses of the French and the other privileged members of "the camp of the saints" as they debate how to deal with the inexorably advancing multitude. Raspail is particularly effective here in capturing the platitudes of official announcements, the voices of ordinary people, the tone of statements by concerned bishops, and so on. The book also seems realistic in its recounting of the crumbling away of resolve by French sailors and soldiers when they are given the order to repel physically—to shoot or torpedo—this armada of helpless yet menacing people. It would be much easier, clearly, to confront a military foe, such as a Warsaw Pact nation. The fifty-one (short) chapters are skillfully arranged so that the reader's attention is switched back and forth, within a two-month time frame, between the anxious debates in Paris and events attending the slow and grisly voyage of the Calcutta masses. The denouement, with the French population fleeing their southern regions and army units deserting in droves, is especially dramatic.

THE VOYAGE OF THE *GOLDEN VENTURE*

WHY revisit this controversial and nowadays hard-to-obtain novel? The recovery of this neglected work helps us to call attention to the key global problem of the final years of the twentieth century: unbalanced wealth and resources, unbalanced demographic trends, and the relationship between the two. Many members of the more prosperous economies are beginning to agree with Raspail's vision: a world of two "camps," North and South, separate and unequal, in which the rich will have to fight and the poor will have to die if mass migration is not to overwhelm us all. Migration is the third part of the problem. If we do not act now to counteract tendencies toward global apartheid, they will only hurry the day when we may indeed see Raspail's vision made real.

One of us (Kennedy) first heard *The Camp of the Saints* referred to at various times during discussions of illegal migration. One such occasion was in the summer of 1991, following media reports about the thousands of desperate Albanians who commandeered ships to take them to the Italian ports of Bari and Brindisi, where they were locked in soccer stadiums by the local police before being forcibly returned to a homeland so poor that it is one of the few parts of Europe sometimes categorized as "developing" countries. Apparently, one reason for this exodus was that the Albanians had been watching Italian television—including commercials for consumer goods, cat food shown being served on a silver platter, and the like. More than a few colleagues mentioned that the incident struck them as a small-scale version of Raspail's grim scenario.



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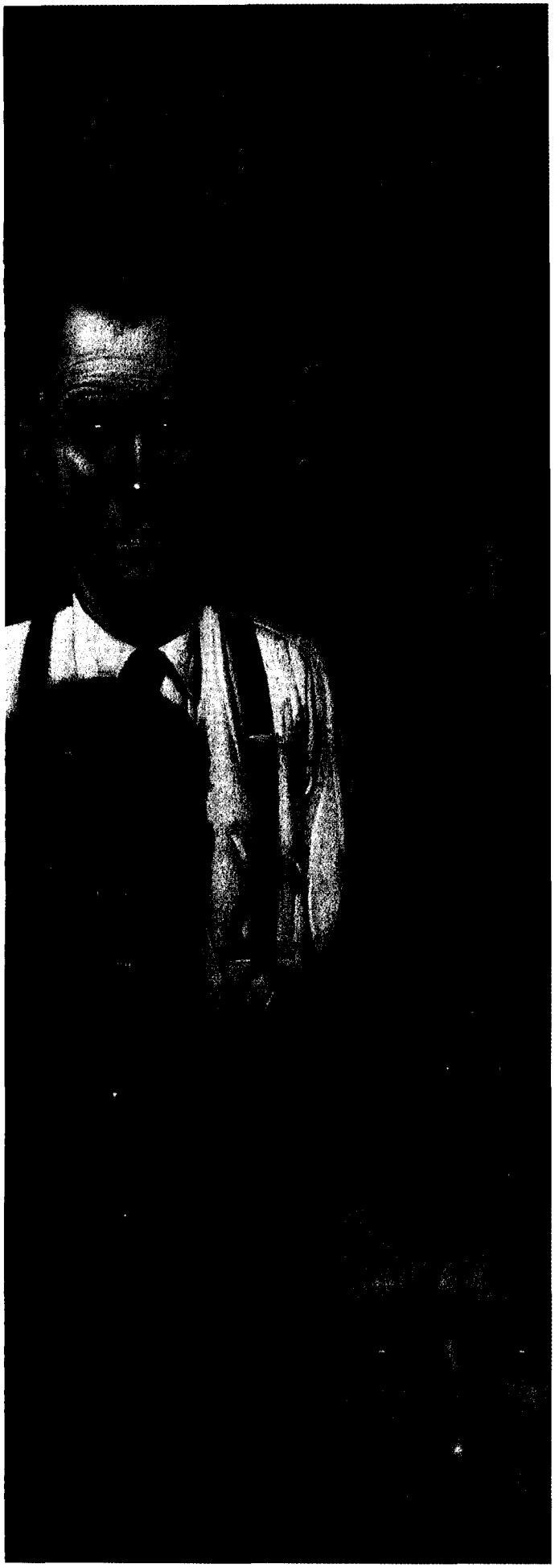

If a short trip across the Adriatic seems a far cry from a passage from Calcutta to Provence, the voyage of the *Golden Venture* was even more fantastic than anything imagined by Raspail. This 150-foot rust-streaked freighter left Bangkok, Thailand, in February of 1993 carrying ninety Chinese refugees, mostly from the impoverished Fujian province. Two hundred more Chinese boarded in Mombasa, Kenya. When they finally came ashore, on June 6, in the darkness and pounding surf off Rockaway, Queens, in New York City (eight drowned trying to swim to land), all had traveled a much greater distance than Raspail's fictional refugees.

What was remarkable about the *Golden Venture* was not that Chinese refugees tried to smuggle themselves into the United States—some experts estimate that 10,000 to 30,000 manage to do so each year—but that in traveling west rather than east, they were taking a new route to America. In the past most Chinese illegal immigrants came ashore on the West Coast or crossed into California after landing in Mexico. But the *Golden Venture* rounded the Cape of Good Hope and thus crossed some of the same waters as Raspail's imaginary armada.

The Camp of the Saints was also to some extent recalled in a special report of October 18, 1992, by the *New York Times* correspondent Alan Riding, about the remarkable increase in illegal immigration across the Strait of Gibraltar, the narrowest gap between Africa and Europe. The most startling fact in the report was not that ambitious, unemployed North Africans were heading to Europe to find jobs but that such traffic has now become pan-continental or even global. Of the 1,547 immigrants detained by the Spanish authorities in the first ten months of the year of Riding's report, 258 were from Ethiopia, 193 from Liberia, seventy-two from South Africa, and sixty-four from Somalia. Seventy-two from South Africa! Did they walk, hitchhike, or take buses across the entire continent? Even a journey that long pales beside Riding's further point that "word of the new route had spread far beyond Morocco, with not only Algerians and growing numbers of sub-Saharan Africans, but also Filipinos, Chinese and even the occasional Eastern Europeans among those detained." Take a look at an atlas and pose the question, Just how does a desperate citizen of, say, Bulgaria get to Morocco *without* going through western Europe?

THE DOOM OF THE WHITE RACE

JEAN Raspail, born in 1925, has been writing works of travel and fiction since the 1950s. Many of his books recount his experiences in Alaska, the Caribbean, the Andes; he is not ignorant of foreign lands and cultures. Raspail won prizes from the Académie Française, and last year only narrowly failed to be elected to that august body. *The Camp of the Saints* is different from his other writings. In the preface, written a decade after the book, he states that

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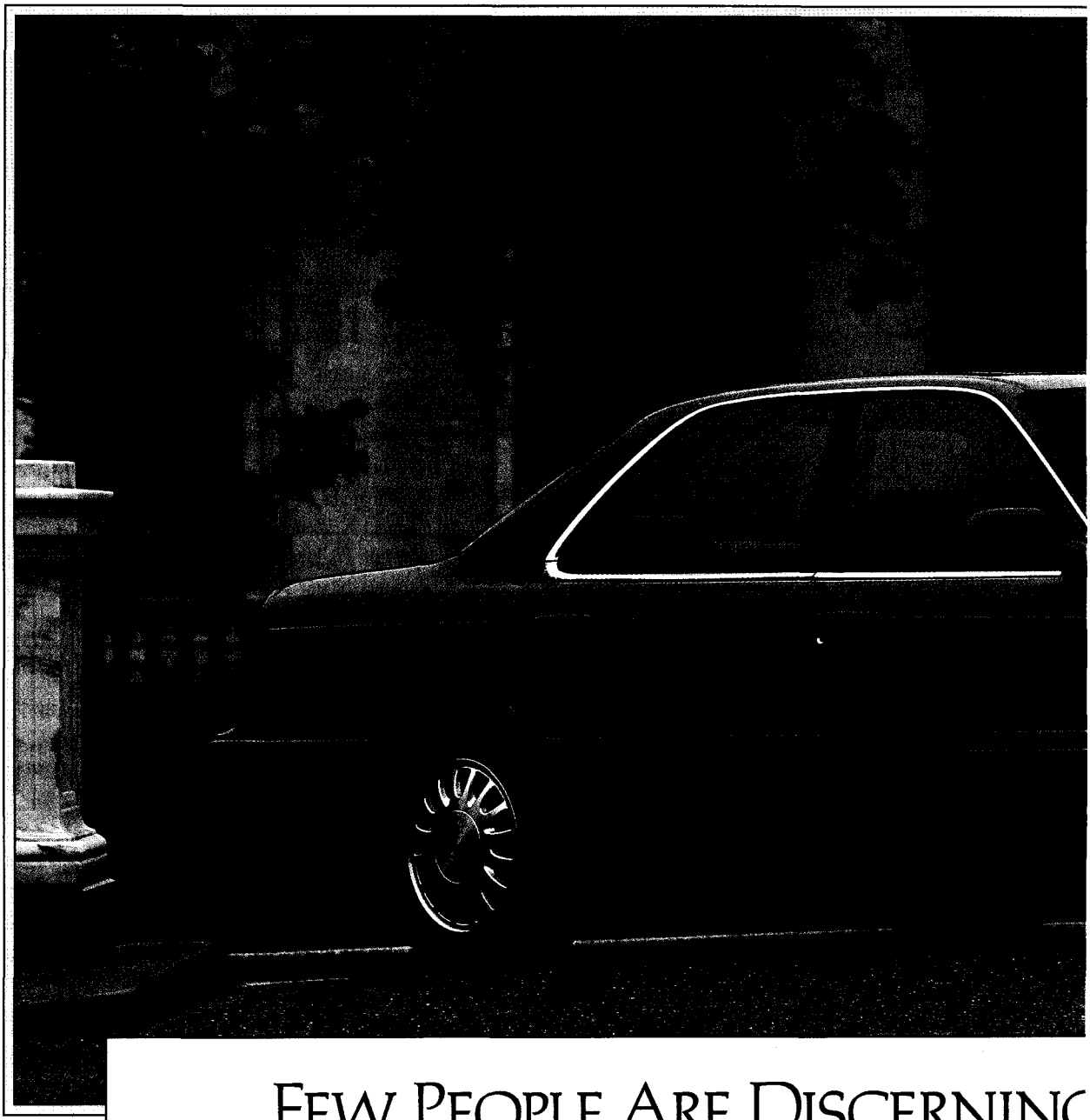

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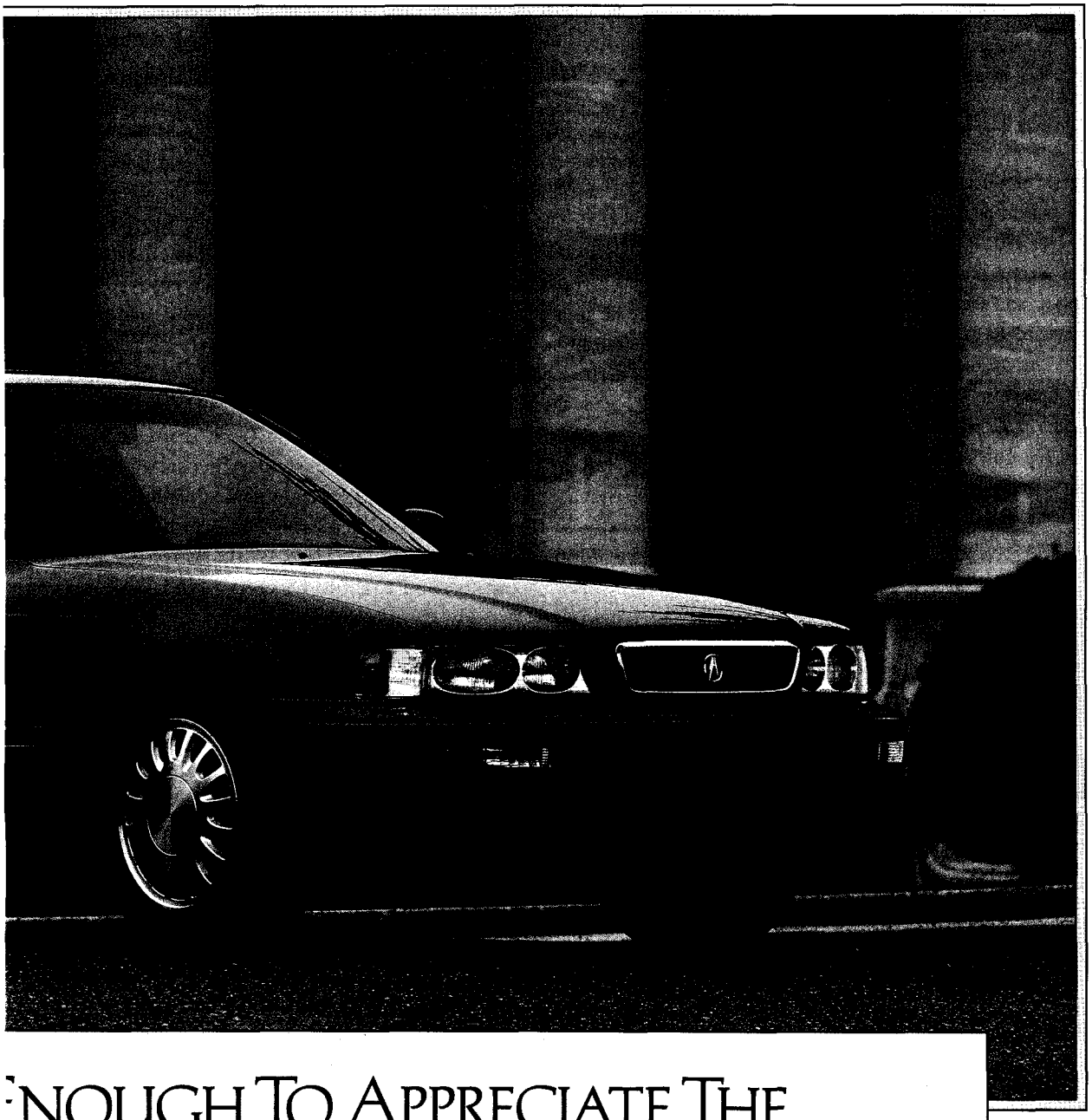

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ENOUGH TO APPRECIATE THE SE, IS PART OF THE APPEAL.

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one morning in 1972, at home by the shore of the Mediterranean, he had this vision:

> A million poor wretches, armed only with their weakness and their numbers, overwhelmed by misery, encumbered with starving brown and black children, ready to disembark on our soil, the vanguard of the multitudes pressing hard against every part of the tired and overfed West. I literally saw *them*, saw the major problem they presented, a problem absolutely insoluble by our present moral standards. To let them in would destroy us. To reject them would destroy them.
>
> During the ten months I spent writing this book, the vision never left me. That is why *The Camp of the Saints*, with all its imperfections, was a kind of emotional outpouring.

Is this simply a work of imagination or, as Raspail's critics charge, a racist tract dressed up as fiction? In some parts of the novel Raspail appears to be resigned, fatalistic, *not* taking sides: "The Good are at war with the Bad, true enough," he says at one point. "But one man's 'Bad' is another man's 'Good,' and vice versa. It's a question of sides." And he has the President of France, puzzling over the question of inequality among races, attribute to the Grand Mufti of Paris the idea that it is "just a question of rotation," with "different ones on top at different times"—as if to imply that it is quite natural for Europe, having expanded outward for the past 500 years, to be overwhelmed in turn by non-Western peoples. Indeed, Raspail claims that in depicting the French armed forces fleeing from confrontation rather than bloodily repulsing the armada, he shows he is no racist, for "I denied to the white Occident, at least in my novel, its last chance for salvation."

Yet for much of the rest of the novel Raspail makes plain where his cultural and political preferences lie. Whereas the Europeans all have characters and identities, from the Belgian consul in Calcutta, trampled to death by the crowd, to the French politicians paralyzed by their impending fate, the peoples of the Third World, whether already laboring in the slums of Paris or advancing upon the high seas, are unrelentingly disparaged.

> All the kinky-haired, swarthy-skinned, long-despised phantoms; all the teeming ants toiling for the white man's comfort; all the swill men and sweepers, the troglodytes, the stinking drudges, the swivel-hipped menials, the womanless wretches, the lung-spewing hackers; all the numberless, nameless, tortured, tormented, indispensable mass. . . . They don't say much. But they know their strength, and they'll never forget it. If they have an objection, they simply growl, and it soon becomes clear that their growls run the show. After all, five billion growling human beings, rising over the length and breadth of the earth, can make a lot of noise!
>
> Meanwhile, along with Josiane and Marcel, seven hundred million whites sit shutting their eyes and plugging their ears.

If anything, Raspail's contempt for sympathizers and fellow travelers in the West is even more extreme. The collection of churchmen who plead for tolerance of the approaching armada; the intellectuals and media stars who think this is a great event; the hippies, radicals, and counterculture people who swarm south to greet the Indians as the panic-stricken Provençois are rushing north—all these get their comeuppance in Raspail's bitter, powerful prose. In one of the most dramatic events, close to the book's end, the leader of the French radicals is portrayed as rushing forward to welcome the "surging mob" of Indians, only to find himself "swept up in turn, carried off by the horde. Struggling to breathe. All around him, the press of sweaty, clammy bodies, elbows nudging madly in a frantic push forward, every man for himself, in a scramble to reach the streams of milk and honey." The message is clear: race, not class or ideology, determines everything, and the wretched of the earth will see no distinction between unfriendly, fascistic Frenchmen on the one hand and liberal-minded bishops and yuppies on the other. All have enjoyed too large a share of the world's wealth for too long, and their common fate is now at hand.

It is not just the people of France who suffer that fate. Near the end of Raspail's novel the mayor of New York is made to share Gracie Mansion with three families from Harlem, the Queen of England must marry her son to a Pakistani, and just one drunken Russian general stands in the way of the Chinese as they swarm into Siberia. "In the Philippines, in all the stifling Third World ports—Jakarta, Karachi, Conakry, and again in Calcutta—other huge armadas were ready to weigh anchor, bound for Australia, New Zealand, Europe. . . . Many a civilization, victim of the selfsame fate, sits tucked in our museums, under glass, neatly labeled."

To describe *The Camp of the Saints* as an apocalyptic novel would be a truism. The very title of the book comes, of course, from Saint John's Apocalypse, the lines of which are uttered almost exactly by the messianic untouchable early on in the book. The work is studded with references to much earlier clashes between "the West" and "the Rest": to Charles Martel, to the fall of Constantinople, to Don John of Austria, to Kitchener at Omdurman—all to fortify the suggestion that what is unfolding is just part of a millennium-old international Kulturkampf that is always resolved by power and numbers. When Europe dominated the globe, the Caucasian race's relative share of world population achieved its high point; as the proportion shrinks, Raspail argues, so the race dooms itself. In his 1982 preface he spells it out again: "Our hypersensitive and totally blind West . . . has not yet understood that whites, in a world become too small for its inhabitants, are now a minority and that the proliferation of other races dooms our race, my race, irretrievably to extinction in the century to come, if we hold fast to our present moral principles."

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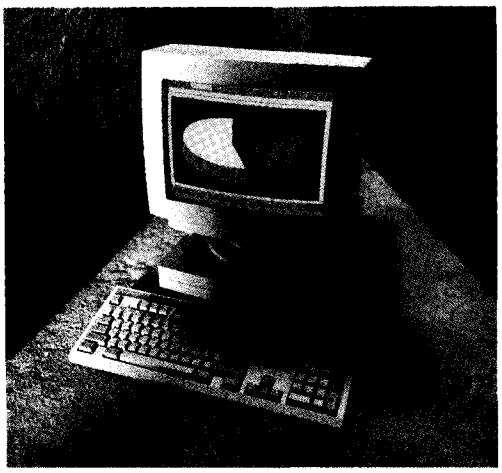

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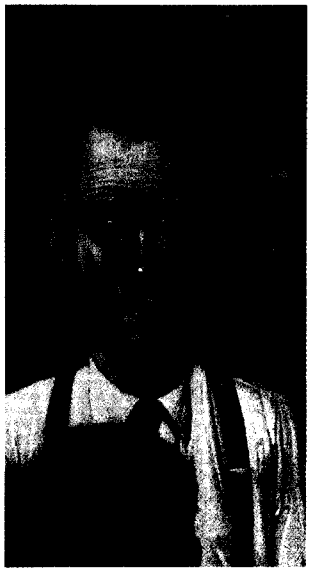
"NOT SINCE GENGHIS KHAN"

WHEN *The Camp of the Saints* first appeared, in 1973, it was, to put it mildly, not well received. Sixties radicalism still prevailed in Paris; a century of capitalist imperialism was blamed for the problems of the Third World, though the feeling was that Africans and Asians now at least had control of their own destinies; and French intellectuals and bureaucrats believed that they had a special rapport with non-European cultures, unlike the insensitive Anglo-Saxons. Besides being shocking in its contents, Raspail's book was also offensive: it insulted almost everything that Sorbonne professors held dear. *The Camp* was swiftly dismissed as a racist tract. As for Raspail, he went off to write other novels and travel books. But in late 1985 he offended again, by joining forces with the demographer Gérard Dumont to write an article in *Le Figaro Magazine* claiming that the fast-growing non-European immigrant component of France's population would endanger the survival of traditional French culture, values, and identity. By this time the immigration issue had become much more contentious in French politics, and only a year earlier Jacques Chirac, then the mayor of Paris, had publicly warned, "When you compare Europe with the other continents, it's terrifying. In demographic terms, Europe is disappearing. Twenty or so years from now our countries will be empty, and no matter what our technological power, we shall be incapable of putting it to use." The Raspail-Dumont article was highly embarrassing to the French Socialist government, which, though pledged to crack down on illegal immigrants, was deeply disturbed by the potential political fallout from such a controversial piece. No fewer than three Cabinet Ministers, including Prime Minister Laurent Fabius, attacked it as "racist propaganda" and "reminiscent of the wildest Nazi theories." It was no consolation to them that Jean-Marie Le Pen, the head of the fast-growing National Front, was making immigration the leading issue as he campaigned among the discontented French electorate.

Despite attempts by centrist politicians to ignore this touchy topic, it refuses to go away. For example, although the early 1990s were supposed to mark the culmination of the decades-long drive toward the European Union's integration, an increasing number of Europeans were looking over their shoulders, especially after the British Broadcasting Corporation raised the specter of a "march" on Europe in a 1990 made-for-TV movie of that name. In the program a band of Sudanese refugees decide to walk straight across the Sahara rather than slowly starve on the paltry rations of Western relief agencies. With timely assistance from the Libyan government, which calls them the "spirit of suffering Africa," a throng swollen to 250,000 finally arrives at the Strait of Gibraltar. "We've traveled almost as far as Columbus," says their leader, now called the Mahdi. "We have no power but this: to choose where we die," he proclaims before embarking for the European shore. "All we ask of you is, watch us die." On the advice of a media-savvy African-American congressman, the flotilla washes ashore in the glare of flashbulbs and prime-time TV broadcasts—and a large force of EU soldiers. The movie ends there, and what happens next is left to the viewer's imagination. But its production was enough to provoke Raspail to complain. The producers insisted that when they began the project they had been unaware of the earlier work—an insistence that only confirmed that the themes of *The Camp* continue to resonate. *The March* has itself become something of a cult classic. Though rejected by the Public Broadcasting System as "not suitable to their programming" (nobody actually said it was too hot to handle), after four years it continues to be shown to audiences throughout Europe.

All of which brings us to the present day. Raspail may have written the most politically incorrect book in France



WHY revisit Jean Raspail's controversial and hard-to-obtain novel? Many members of the more prosperous economies are beginning to agree with his vision: a world of two "camps," North and South, separate and unequal, in which the rich will have to fight and the poor will have to die if mass migration is not to overwhelm us.

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in the second half of the twentieth century, but the national mood concerning immigration is nowadays much less liberal than it was two decades ago. In fact, France's tough new Conservative government began this year by announcing a series of crackdowns on illegal immigrants, including mass deportation. "When we have sent home several planeloads, even boatloads and trainloads, the world will get the message," claimed Charles Pasqua, the hardline Cabinet Minister in charge of security and immigration affairs. "We will close our frontiers." Last year he announced that France would become a "zero immigration" country, a stunning reversal of its 200-year-old policy of offering asylum to those in need. That Pasqua believed it was in fact possible to halt immigration was called into doubt when he later remarked, "The problems of immigration are ahead of us and not behind us." By the year 2000, he asserted, there will be 60 million people in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia under the age of twenty and "without a future." Where else to go but France, whose television programs they can view every evening, much as Albanians goggle at Italian cat-food commercials?

The Camp of the Saints is not well known in the United States, but it has attracted some attention in predictable circles. The only English-language edition we could find came from the American Immigration Control Foundation, which, as its name suggests, campaigns for stricter policies. That is an aim also expressed by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) in its recent publication *Crowding Out the Future: World Population Growth, U.S. Immigration, and Pressures on Natural Resources*, which presents the following argument very early on:

> A traditional moralist may object, asserting, "I am my brother's keeper." We must ask him: "And what about your children? And your children's children? What about the children of your neighbor next door? Must we subdivide and distribute our patrimony among the children of all the world?" Americans are already outnumbered twenty-to-one by the rest of the world. Our grandchildren will be outnumbered even more. Must we condemn them to the poverty of an absolutely equal distribution? How would that benefit them or the descendants of other people?
>
> Total poverty can be avoided only if people agree that the ancient admonition "Charity begins at home" is still the best guide to philanthropic action.

The Washington Times is also strongly in the "let's regain control of our borders" camp, and its staff writers and op-ed contributors find reference to Raspail particularly useful in attacking the United States' liberal immigration policy. Illegal immigrants caught coming by boat—Chinese, Haitians—make for especially neat comparisons, and nowadays the language is as blunt as Raspail's own. "Not since Genghis Khan rode out of the Asian steppes has the West—Europe as well as the United States—encountered such an alien invasion," the *Washington Times* columnist Samuel Francis has written. His fellow columnist Paul Craig Roberts predicts "a cataclysmic future." Roberts has written, "Not since the Roman Empire was overrun by illegal aliens in the fifth century has the world experienced the massive population movements of recent years." Both writers posit what others have called a growing "Third-World-ization" of America's cities, with a privileged minority increasingly besieged by a disgruntled, polyglot lumpenproletariat. (Raspail had carefully built such a situation into *The Camp of the Saints*: the night came when the "black tide," learning what had happened in Provence, rose up and overwhelmed the elegant apartments around Central Park.)

Readers made uncomfortable by all this nativist and racist opinion will no doubt find it easy to counterattack. Migrants are not usually the poorest of the poor—instead they are the ones best informed about opportunities elsewhere and able to act on them. Paul Craig Roberts's figure of an "estimated" three million illegal aliens who find their way into the United States *each year* is much higher than other guesses we've seen. And historically, the greatest population migrations of all consisted of the tens of millions of "illegal aliens" who sailed from Europe to the Americas, Africa, and Australasia during the past 250 years; in the face of them the aboriginal inhabitants could do little but submit or be annihilated. In pointing to the reversal of that flow, Raspail was at least willing to concede that "different ones [are] on top at different times." Moreover, many economists—Julian Simon, at the University of Maryland, is one—argue that immigration gives a net boost to the United States, a position also held by the free-market paper *The Wall Street Journal.* Those who predict that immigration will become one of the hottest political issues of the 1990s may be correct; what is less certain is that Fortress America attitudes will win the day. Yet if the United States maintains a liberal policy while every other rich nation decides, like France, to do the opposite, will that not simply increase the pressures on this country's borders?

CORNUCOPIAN HOPES

LET us now get to the heart of the matter. Readers may well find Raspail's vision uncomfortable and his language vicious and repulsive, but the central message is clear: we are heading into the twenty-first century in a world consisting for the most part of a relatively small number of rich, satiated, demographically stagnant societies and a large number of poverty-stricken, resource-depleted nations whose populations are doubling every twenty-five years or less. The demographic imbalances are exacerbated by grotesque disparities of wealth between rich and poor countries. Despite the easy references that are made to our common humanity, it is difficult to believe that Switzerland, with an annual average per capita income of about $35,000, and Mali, with an average per capita income of less than $300,

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are on the same planet—but Raspail's point is that *they are*, and that a combination of push and pull factors will entice desperate, ambitious Third World peasants to approach the portals of the First World in ever-increasing numbers. The pressures are now much greater than they were when Raspail wrote, not only because we've added 1.5 billion people to our planet since the early 1970s, but also, ironically, because of the global communications revolution, which projects images of Western lifestyles, consumer goods, and youth culture across the globe. Ambitious peasants no longer need a messianic untouchable to urge them to leave by boat for Europe; they see the inducements every day on their small black-and-white television sets.

Is all this gloom and doom justified? What about rosier visions of the future? What about the good news? The apocalyptic literature appears to be at odds with an equally large array of writings, chiefly by free-market economists and consultants, that proclaim a brave new world of ever-greater production, trade, wealth, and standards of living for all. In these portrayals of "the coming global boom," a combination of market forces, diminished government interference, ingenious technologies, and the creation of a truly universal customer base will allow our planet to double or treble its income levels during the next few decades. In the view of those who believe that the global technological and communications revolution is making the world more integrated, rather than more envious, the constant modernization of the world economy is leading to a steady convergence of standards of production and living. As more and more countries open up to a borderless world, the prospects for humankind—or, at least, for those able to adapt—are steadily improving.

Yet a closer look at this cornucopian literature reveals that its focus is overwhelmingly upon the world's winners—the well-educated lawyers, management consultants, software engineers, and other "symbolic analysts" analyzed by Secretary of Labor Robert Reich—who sell their expertise at handsome prices to clients in other rich societies. To

---

LONG POINT LIGHT

Long Point's apparitional
this warm spring morning,
the strand a blur of sandy light,

and the square white
of the lighthouse—separated from us
by the bay's ultramarine

as if it were nowhere
we could ever go—gleams
like a tower's ghost, hazing

into the rinsed blue of March,
our last outpost in the huge
indetermination of sea.

It seems cheerful enough,
in the strengthening sunlight,
fixed point accompanying our walk

along the shore. Sometimes I think
it's the where-we-will-be,
only not yet, like some visible outcropping

of the afterlife. In the dark
its deeper invitations emerge:
green witness at night's end,

flickering margin of horizon,
marker of safety and limit.
But limitless, the way it calls us,

and where it seems to want us
to come. And so I invite it
into the poem, to speak,

and the lighthouse says:
Here is the world you asked for,
gorgeous and opportune,

here is nine o'clock, harbor-wide,
and a glinting code: promise and warning.
The morning's the size of heaven.

What will you do with it?

—MARK DOTY

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the extent that they consider the situation in the Third World, the cornucopian writers typically point to the model minority of global politics—the East Asians. The techno-liberals pay hardly any attention to the mounting human distress in Calcutta or Nicaragua or Liberia, and no wonder: were they to consider the desperate plight of the poorest two *billion* beings on our planet, their upbeat messages would sound less plausible.

Our global optimists might consider Robert D. Kaplan's horrific analysis, in the February, 1994, *Atlantic Monthly*, of the collapse of entire societies across West Africa. With governments losing control of any areas they cannot intimidate through their armies and police, groups of unemployed young men plundering travelers, AIDS and tuberculosis joining malaria to kill people in their prime, forests cut down and topsoil washed away, the region increasingly looks like strife-torn, plague-ridden medieval Europe. Even *The Economist*, claiming to detect "a flicker of light" in Africa amid the gloom, admits that if the sub-Saharan countries did grow at the (overoptimistic) rates recently predicted by the World Bank, "Africans would have to wait another 40 years to clamber back to the incomes they had in the mid-1970s. Exclude Nigeria, and the wait would last a century." What *The Economist* did not ask was whether the more than a billion and a half Africans likely to be living in 2035 will be content to watch the Northern Hemisphere grow and prosper while they themselves struggle to attain the same standard of living their great-grandparents had.

It is often argued that Africa is a special case (the Third World's Third World, as the saying goes), although Kaplan's more general point is that the same combination of rapid population growth, mass unemployment among youth, environmental devastation, and social collapse is to be seen, in a less acute form, everywhere from central China to the Euphrates Valley. Reportedly the State Department has sent copies of Kaplan's article to many embassies and missions abroad; the Pentagon prefers Martin Van Creveld's grim portrayal of future chaos and ethnic conflict, *The Transformation of War* (1991)—to which Kaplan's article pays tribute—as recommended reading for its service officers. Perhaps the most significant thing about these writings is their assumption that the demographically driven breakdown of order will not be confined to one continent but will be global in its manifestations—precisely what Raspail sought to convey in his stark account of swarms of immigrants moving out of Jakarta, Karachi, and Conakry.

If the problem is global, it is not all of a piece. There is a world of difference between, say, Mexican immigrants searching for a better life and Rwandan refugees fleeing a grisly death. But the most relevant divide is not between migrants and refugees—we will be seeing a lot more of both—but rather between what they lack and what we have to offer. Regardless of whether it is in an increasingly resentful American labor market or an overcrowded relief camp, the West will be hard put to provide answers to this burgeoning problem.

The techno-liberals are right to draw attention to the fact that virtually all the factors of production—capital, assembly, knowledge, management—have become globalized, moving across national boundaries in the form of investments, consulting expertise, new plants, patents, and so on. What they ignore is that one factor of production has not been similarly liberated: labor. Even the most outré proponent of free-market principles shrinks from arguing that any number of people should be free to go anywhere they like on the planet. This irony—or, better, this double standard—is not unnoticed by the spokespeople of poorer countries, who charge that while the North presses for the unshackling of capital flows, assembly, goods, and services, it firmly resists the liberalization of the global labor market, and that behind the ostensible philanthropic concern about world demographic trends lies a deep fear that the white races of the world will be steadily overwhelmed by everyone else.

NUMBERS COUNT

It is impossible to isolate population growth from the economy, environment, politics, and culture of each country to prove that it causes external migration—though it is suggestive that Haiti and Rwanda have about the highest fertility rates in Latin America and Africa. What cannot be contested is that the sheer size of other countries that are "at risk" will make international migration a problem of ever greater magnitude. Similarly, in broad figures the future pattern of global population increases is not in dispute. At present the earth contains approximately 5.7 billion people and is adding to that total by approximately 93 million a year. It is possible to estimate the rough totals of world population as the next century unfolds: by 2025 the planet will contain approximately 8.5 billion people. The pace of growth is expected to taper off, so the total population may stabilize at around 10 or 11 billion people by perhaps 2050, although some estimates are much larger. By the second quarter of the coming century India may well rival China as the world's most populous country—with 1.4 billion to China's 1.5 billion inhabitants—and many other countries in the Third World are also expected to contain vastly expanded numbers of people: Indonesia 286 million, Nigeria 281 million, Pakistan 267 million, Brazil 246 million, Mexico 150 million, and so on.

Of the many implications of this global trend, four stand out—at least with respect to our inquiry. The first and most important is that 95 percent of the twofold increase in the world's population expected before the middle of the next century will occur in poor countries, especially those least equipped to take the strain. Second, although globally the relative share of human beings in poverty is expected to shrink, in absolute numbers there will be far more poor peo-

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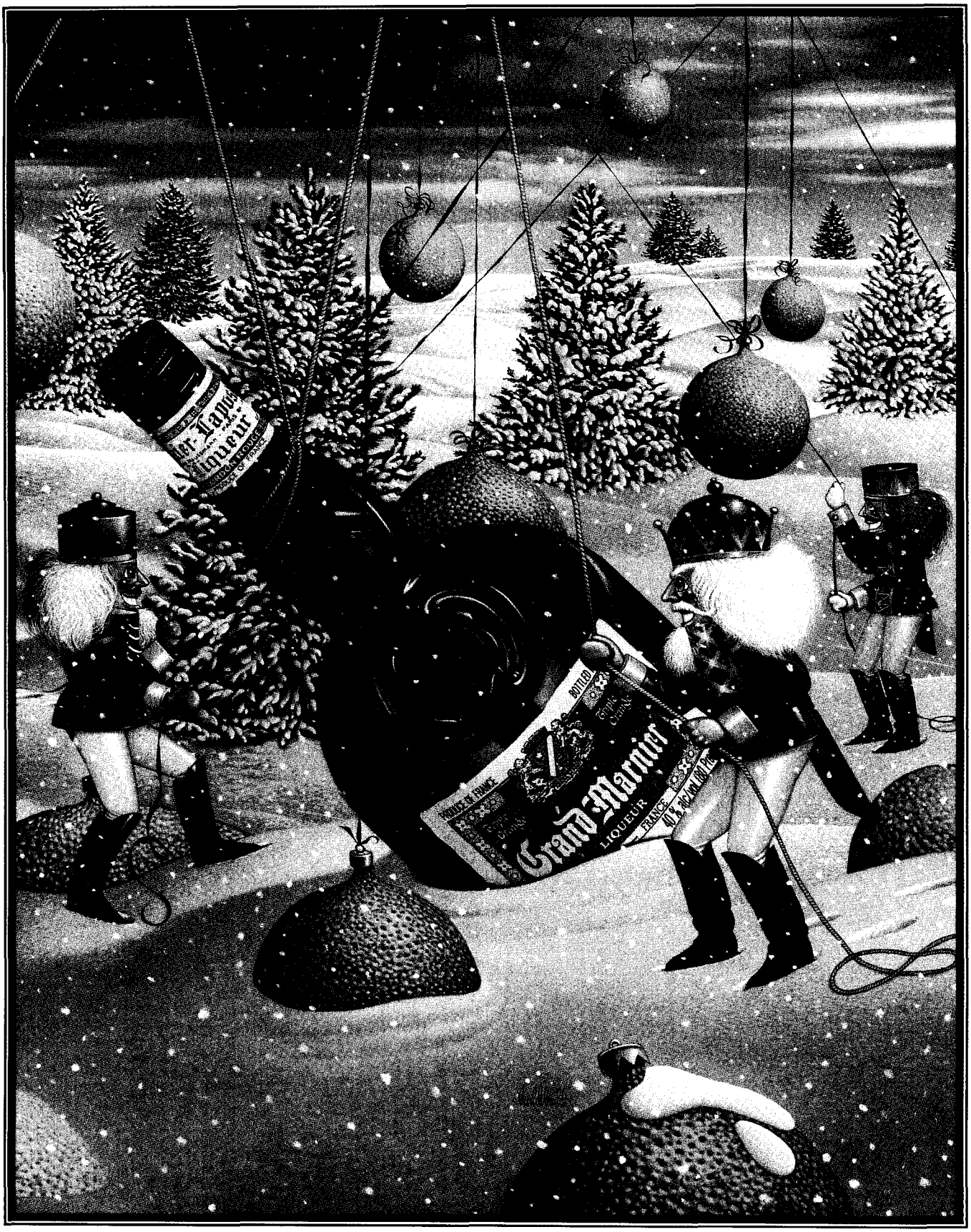

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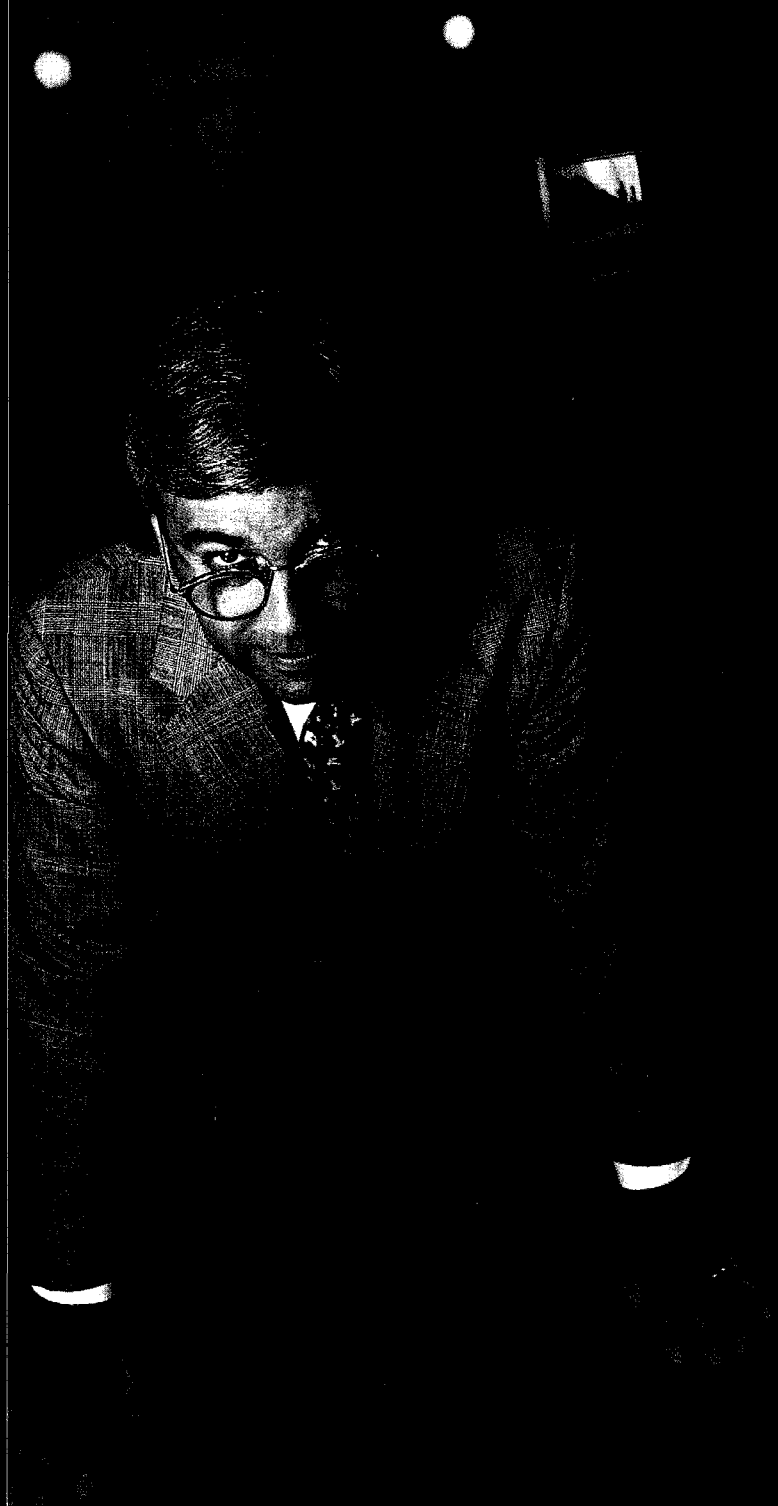

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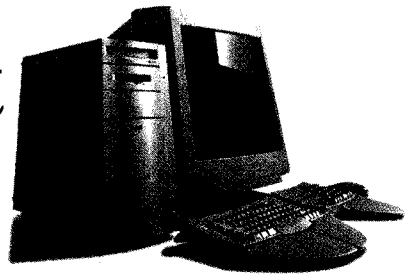

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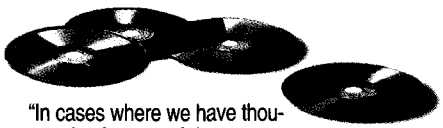

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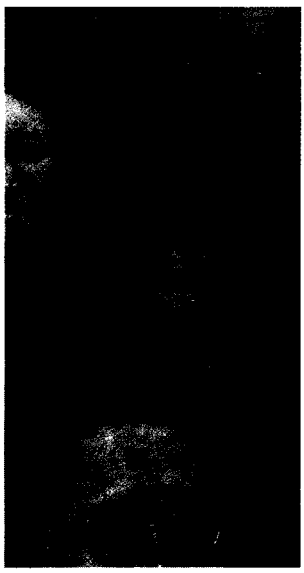
ple on earth in the early twenty-first century than ever before, unless serious intervention occurs. Third, within the Third World a greater and greater percentage of the population is drifting from the countryside into gigantic shanty-cities. Even by the end of this decade São Paulo is expected to contain 22.6 million people, Bombay 18.1 million, Shanghai 17.4 million, Mexico City 16.2 million, and Calcutta 12.7 million—all cities that run the risk of becoming centers of mass poverty and social collapse. (Right now there are 143,000 people per square mile in Lagos and 130,000 per square mile in Jakarta, as compared with 23,700 per square mile in the five boroughs of New York.) And fourth, these societies are increasingly adolescent in composition—in Kenya in 1985, to take an extreme case, 52 percent of the population was under fifteen—and the chances that their resource-poor governments will be able to provide education and jobs for hundreds of millions of teenagers are remote. In many North African cities unemployment rates among youth range from 40 to 70 percent, providing highly combustible levels of frustration among young men who turn with interest to the anti-Northern messages of fundamentalist mullahs or, equally significant, to tempting televised portrayals of European lifestyles.

Regardless of the rosy prospects for East Asia, the gaps between rich and poor countries—between Europe and Africa, between North America and Central America—are widening, not closing; and, as Raspail bluntly put it, numbers do count. The southern European states of Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, and Greece, whose combined populations, it is estimated, will increase by a mere 4.5 million between 1990 and 2025, lie close to North African countries—Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt—whose populations are expected to grow by 107 million in the same period. The population of the United States is expected to rise by 29 percent by 2025, while its southern neighbors Mexico and Guatemala may grow by 63 percent and 135 percent respectively. Together Europe and North America, which contained more than 22 percent of the world's population in 1950, will contain less than 10 percent by 2025.

In any case, even if tremendous economic progress were to be made over the next few decades in some of the poor regions of the globe, the result, ironically, would also challenge the West, as the economic and political balances of power swung toward countries that, on current evidence (the 1993 human-rights conference in Vienna, the Singapore caning), will actively resist cultural homogenization. Kishore Mahbubani, the deputy secretary of Singapore's Foreign Ministry, recently suggested as much when he pointed to a "siege mentality" in the West, affirming that "power is shifting among civilizations." "Simple arithmetic demonstrates Western folly," he wrote. "The West has 800 million people; the rest make up almost 4.7 billion. . . . no Western society would accept a situation where 15 percent of its population legislated for the remaining 85 percent." Westerners' "fatal flaw," according to Mahbubani, is "an inability to conceive that the West may have developed structural weaknesses in its core value systems and institutions." He added, "The West is bringing about its relative decline by its own hand." It is probably still premature to predict when China will overtake the United States as the world's largest economy, but it is undeniable that a shift in material power toward Asia is under way. Raspail's "seven hundred million whites" may well confront two very different challenges by early next century: Africa's collapse and Asia's rise.



THE only solution is to persuade our political leaders to recognize the colossal, interconnected nature of our global problem and to strain every element of our human ingenuity, resourcefulness, and energy to slow down, or if possible reverse, the buildup of worldwide demographic and environmental pressures.

Perhaps the global problem of the early twenty-first century is basically this: that across our planet a number of what might be termed demographic-technological fault lines are emerging, between fast-growing, adolescent, resource-poor, undercapitalized, and undereducated populations on one side and technologically inventive, demographically moribund,

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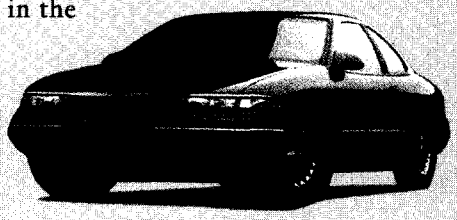

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and increasingly nervous rich societies on the other. The fault line central to *The Camp of the Saints* lies along the Mediterranean, but it is easy to point to several others, from the Rio Grande to central Asia. One of the most interesting lines of all runs right through China, dividing most of the coastal provinces from the interior. How those on the two sides of these widening regional or intercontinental fissures are to relate to each other early in the next century dwarfs every other issue in global affairs.

If one accepts that this is our biggest long-term challenge, then the inadequacies of simplistic, knee-jerk responses assume great importance. The zero-immigration policies of France and Japan do nothing to affect tilting population balances and probably increase the resentment of these countries' poorer neighbors, but denying that migration is an international problem, as some American liberals do, invites the possibility that a continuing (and growing) flow of immigrants will place even greater strains on this country's social and cultural politics.

Yet what are the alternatives? Even if we wished to alter demographic balances, is there any acceptable prospect of doing so? When Raspail said, obliquely, that our "present moral principles" were dooming the West, was he really getting at the idea that rich societies could expect to preserve the status quo only if they were prepared to use any means necessary to cut global population? It is easy to see where that logic leads. To take but one of the more extreme examples, a Finnish philosopher has become a best-selling writer in his country by arguing that the world can continue to be habitable only if a few billion human beings are eliminated; another world war would therefore be "a happy occasion for the planet."

Some would argue that we must reverse the decline of Western populations, and that any people that falls below the replacement fertility rate (2.1 children per woman) is committing demographic suicide. This is a sensitive topic. Quite apart from environment-oriented objections to a rise in the birth rates of rich societies (the average American or European baby will consume in its lifetime hundreds of times as many resources as the average Chadian or Haitian baby), there are simply too many social and cultural obstacles to reversing a declining national birth rate. Japanese and American politicians who bemoan the failure of "bright, well-educated women" to bear enough children have been noticeably unsuccessful in their campaigns. Perhaps, then, we should just accept that the global demographic imbalances are so huge that nothing can be done to affect them, and, like the old professor in Raspail's book, simply hunker down and survey the impending invasion through a spyglass.

The only serious alternative, it seems to us, is simultaneously to persuade our political leaders to recognize the colossal, interconnected nature of our global problem and to strain every element of our human ingenuity, resourcefulness, and energy to slow down, or if possible reverse, the buildup of worldwide demographic and environmental pressures. Such an effort cannot rest upon a single policy, such as urging Third World countries to reduce their population growth; it must instead be part of a major North-South package wherein all parties, in accepting changes to their present policies, are persuaded to see that a comprehensive and coordinated response is the only way forward. If political leaders and their advisers cannot come up with some sort of win-win solution, in which every country can see benefits for itself, serious reforms are unlikely and humankind's prospects by 2025 may indeed be bleak.

A NEW (NORTH-SOUTH) DEAL

WHAT elements should be included in such a package? In offering some answers to that question, it is important to stress that nothing that follows is either new or impossible. In theory, there are lots of things that the global community could do to improve its condition, and such ideas have been around for decades, if not longer. The real problem has been the lack of political commitment to change, or, to put it more charitably, the tendency of national leaders and delegates to see only the elements of the package that call for sacrifices on their part—the North to contribute more money, the South to accept environmental monitoring—and to ignore both the individual and the collective gains that could flow from a linked set of agreements between developed and developing countries. If that mindset can be changed, so can everything else.

- What if, for example, the rich Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries actually fulfilled their quarter-century-old promise to allocate 0.7 percent of gross domestic product annually to development aid, instead of (for the most part) falling far short of that target? The United States, with one of the poorest records of all, now contributes less than 0.2 percent of GDP each year. What if the OECD countries were bold enough to contribute one percent of GDP each year? As a kind of global insurance premium—protecting not only poorer countries but also ourselves from the worst consequences of mismatched demographics and development—this is not very much. In fact, if viewed more positively, as an investment in the future of the people of our planet, it is a modest sum indeed.
- What if this money could actually be spent efficiently and appropriately, instead of falling into the wrong hands and being devoted to the wrong purposes? For the fact is that international-aid agencies have (again for the most part) acquired a reputation for investing in ambitious, technologically inappropriate schemes, channeling funds to highly paid consultants and local leaders and ignoring the ideas of indigenous inhabitants, while poor countries themselves have provided far too many examples of corrupt, oppressive, or

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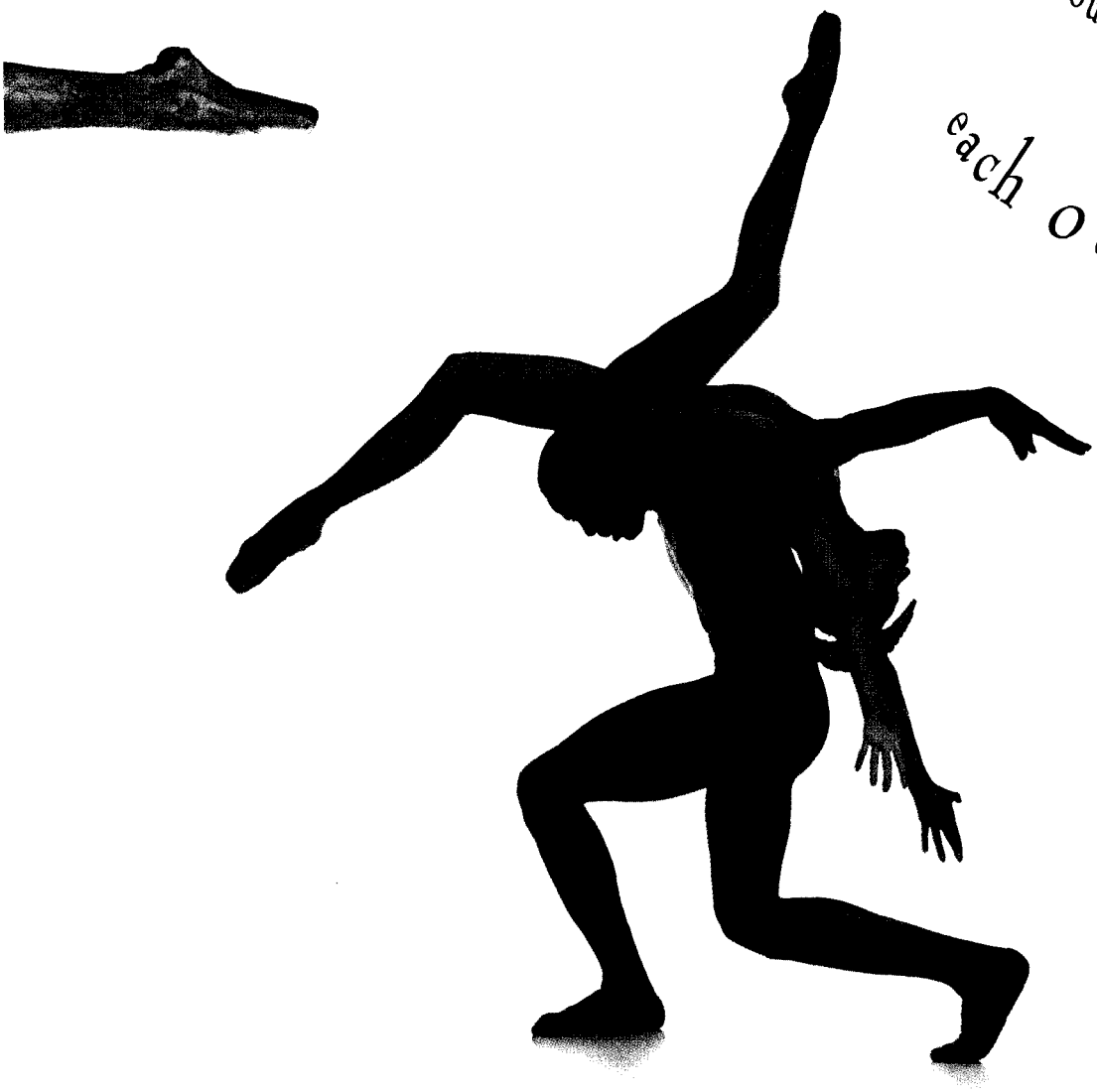

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simply inefficient regimes that have squandered their treasuries and their resources for years. Extra development aid has no chance of succeeding unless it is accompanied by vastly improved accounting and supervisory techniques. However, the failings of present regimes and of previous aid programs are no reason not to continue to try to assist development; if anything, these provide compelling reasons to redouble—and reform—our efforts.

• What if we were able to use some of this money to employ the tens of thousands of scientists and engineers now released from Cold War–related research to seek solutions to our global environmental problems? Such solutions might include a truly dramatic breakthrough in solar or photovoltaic energy production, achieving such a drop in the cost of sun-powered energy that it could be made available to the peoples of Asia and Africa, and could wean them from their reliance on wood, oil, coal, and other fossil fuels. The enhanced technology might also include the mass production of small solar ovens, sufficient to cook a village's meals without a daily search for firewood. The results of breakthroughs in biotech agriculture (new disease-resistant and heat-resistant crop strains) might be shared without requiring large patent and user fees from poor nations.

• What if it were possible to respond to the desire of hundreds of millions of women in Third World countries for access to safe and inexpensive contraceptives, to allow them to stabilize family size and concentrate on nurturing their existing children? The costs involved are not enormous—a few billions of dollars rather than hundreds of billions—and when such programs are administered through women's groups and supported by enlightened governments, they can have a dramatic effect on fertility rates, as has recently been demonstrated in Kenya and Egypt. (Such programs ought to be kept apart from the issue of abortion, which is much more problematic politically and which, in any case, is used disproportionately in many Third World countries to prevent the birth of girls.)

• Since order is the precondition of social betterment, what if, instead of the nations of the world having to respond to or rebuff the United Nations Secretary General's pleas to send troops for peacekeeping purposes to one crisis spot after another, some of the more useful schemes to improve the UN's capacities—from creating a military staff to establishing "ready-to-go" units—were agreed upon by the Security Council nations and implemented in the next year or two?

• And what if, as a separate yet parallel measure to reduce violence, a much more serious effort were made to stem the flow of arms (simple guns as well as sophisticated systems) into Third World countries—arms that are manufactured primarily by the five permanent members of the Security Council?

• What if, as a contribution to reducing the forecast clash of civilizations, the United Nations strove to promote agreement not just in the important sphere of human rights but also on the equally important issue of recognizing cultural diversity, both within countries and between technologically dominant cultures and the rest of the globe? This is not a call for a revival of the crude and ideologically inept UNESCO programs of the early 1980s. We would, however, argue that a genuine North-South entente is unlikely unless Third World countries grow less fearful that their cultures will be swallowed up by the technologies and material way of life of richer nations, especially the United States. Cultural arrogance bedevils our planet and gives rise to many conflicts and antagonisms, just as it suffuses *The Camp of the Saints*. If the relationship between North and South is to be improved significantly, a set of norms (and agreements to disagree) must be established that all or at least most nations can abide by.

Various other matters—from measures to enhance the status of women in Third World countries to improved coordination between UN agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions—might also be incorporated into a North-South package of linked agreements. As it is, any one of the aforementioned elements—more aid more efficiently allocated, appropriate and accessible technological advances, reduced fertility rates, enhanced peacekeeping powers, acceptance of cultural diversity—might by itself make all the difference, though we cannot know which one that might be.

DONNE'S ISLAND

How likely are any of these changes to come about during the next few years? This is the critical period if we hope to change the socio-economic condition of humankind in the early decades of the twenty-first century. A global idealist could point to some promising indicators even in the midst of our present woes. There is a growing awareness in at least a few rich societies (the Scandinavian countries, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada) that a serious effort has to be made to improve the lot of poorer countries and protect their environments. There are the impressive economic successes of most of the nations of East Asia, which are raising the quality of life of hundreds of millions of people and which, provided that further environmental damage can be avoided (a big proviso, admittedly), offer a possible model to Third World countries. The end of the Cold War, while certainly not signaling the start of any new world order, has at least permitted the UN Security Council to function as it was designed to. International agencies, especially those within the UN but also innumerable nongovernmental ones, are actively pursuing policies that not only are more realistic than those of previous decades (for example, no more World Bank loans for giant dam projects) but also reveal a greater awareness of the interconnectedness of agendas for real improvement: economic growth, environmental protection, population control, the status of women, migration, jobs, investment, education, human rights, and democracy are all related considerations in any serious effort to improve the condition of the poorer half of humanity. And at least some commentators are openly ar-

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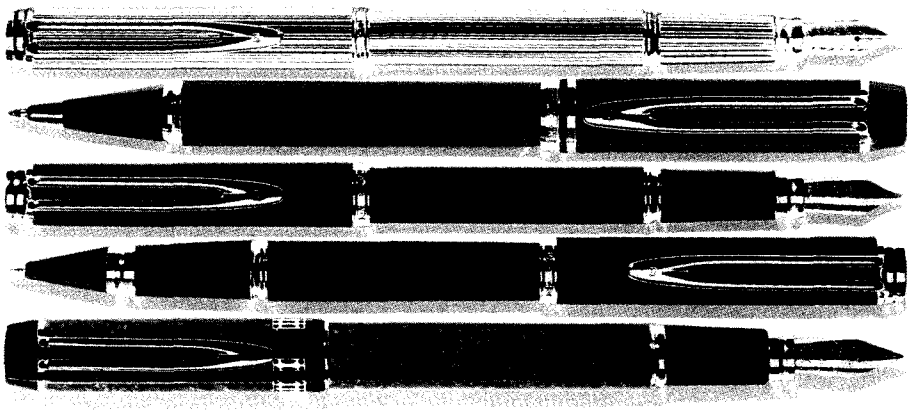

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guing that the need for concerted action ought to be presented no longer in humanitarian-response terms (because, for example, after the fifth or sixth Ethiopian famine "aid fatigue" sets in) but in terms of a global ethic that recognizes our common human destiny and the necessity for shared stewardship of our delicate global ecosystem.

But can these sporadic signs of promise really prevail against the lack of effective political leadership, the turning inward of so many rich societies, the problem of global structural unemployment in an age of intensified modernization, the resistance to many programs to encourage the limitation of family size (even when the thorny issue of abortion is excluded), and the widespread lassitude and even downright hostility that exist in many quarters toward the idea of helping the world's two billion poorest? As Zaire, Rwanda, and Yemen follow Somalia, Sudan, Bosnia, Georgia, and Tajikistan into bloody chaos and ethnic wars, while Boutros Boutros-Ghali finds fewer and fewer nations willing to contribute peacekeeping forces, can one seriously expect significant reforms soon? With the political leadership of the world's most powerful nation deeply divided over scandals and parochial issues, with its public evincing exhaustion in respect to international problems, and with irresponsible though powerful senators blaming the United Nations for every peacekeeping mishap (such as the deaths of U.S. Rangers in Somalia), is it not naive and unrealistic to hope for a North-South package of reforms along the lines suggested above?

Perhaps it is. Perhaps, as some observers fear, we shall have to observe truly awful and widespread societal destruction—the collapse of continents rather than single states; oceans of dead rather than mere rivers—with repercussions that significantly affect rich countries as well as poor before our public and our political leadership finally appreciate that an intelligent and far-reaching response is unavoidable, and that, tempting though it is to turn away from the world, too large a proportion of humankind is heading into the twenty-first century in too distressed a condition for any nation to imagine that it can avoid the larger consequences. We will have to convince a suspicious public and cynical politicians that a serious package of reform measures is not fuzzy liberal idealism but a truer form of realism. It is simply a matter of perspective—or of timing. Doing little or nothing at present seems the more practical course; yet given the pace and intensity of global change, the richer societies need to recognize that John Donne's reasoning applies on an international scale. "No man is an island, entire of itself"—with massacres, social collapse, and migrations occurring across our planet on a weekly basis, do not ask "for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

These are, of course, idealistic arguments, and just how many Americans, Europeans, and citizens of other privileged countries will heed the tocsin is unclear. For the remainder of this century, we suspect, the debate will rage over what and how much should be done to improve the condition of humankind in the face of the mounting pressures described here and in other analyses. One thing seems to us fairly certain. However the debate unfolds, it is, alas, likely that a large part of it—on issues of population, migration, rich versus poor, race against race—will have advanced little beyond the considerations and themes that are at the heart of one of the most disturbing novels of the late twentieth century, Jean Raspail's *The Camp of the Saints*. It will take more than talk to prove the prophet wrong.

SECOND OPINION

OPTIMISM AND OVERPOPULATION

Well, yes, the West must pay attention to the population problems of the Third World. But what sort of attention? The conventional wisdom holds that economic development —and thus economic aid from the West—is the key to curbing population growth in poor nations. Not true, says **VIRGINIA ABERNETHY**

OVERPOPULATION afflicts most countries but remains primarily a local problem—an idea that this article will seek to explain. Reproductive restraint, the solution, is also primarily local; it grows out of a sense that resources are shrinking. Under these circumstances individuals and couples often see limitation of family size as the most likely path to success.

Many scholars, ancient and modern, have known that actual family size is very closely linked to the number of children people want. Paul Demeny, of The Population Council, is exceptionally clear on this, and the World Bank economist Lant Pritchett asserts that 85–95 percent of actual fertility rates are explained by parents' desires—not by mere availability of contraceptives. Pritchett writes that "the impressive declines in fertility observed in the contemporary world are due almost entirely to equally impressive declines in desired fertility." Of Paul Kennedy's contention, in his book *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century*, that "the only practical way to ensure a decrease in fertility rates, and thus in population growth, is to introduce cheap and reliable forms of birth control," Pritchett says, "We could not have invented a clearer and more articulate statement of the view we argue is wrong."

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PROGRESS AND POPULATION

CROSS-CULTURAL and historical data suggest that people have usually limited their families to a size consistent with living comfortably in stable communities. If left undisturbed, traditional societies survive over long periods in balance with local resources. A society lasts in part because it maintains itself within the carrying capacity of its environment.

However, the perception of limits that derive from the local environment is easily neutralized by signals that promise prosperity. Quoting the late Georg Borgstrom, a renowned food scientist and a much-decorated specialist in Third World economies who died five years ago, a 1971 Population Reference Bureau publication explains,

> A number of civilizations, including India and Indonesia, "had a clear picture of the limitations of their villages or communities" before foreign intervention disrupted the traditional patterns. Technical aid programs . . . "made them believe that the adoption of certain technical advances [was] going to free them of this bondage and of dependence on such restrictions."

Economic expansion, especially if it is introduced from outside the society and is also broad-based, encourages the

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belief that formerly recognized limits can be discounted, that everyone can look forward to prosperity, and, as in recent instances, that the West can be counted upon to provide assistance, rescue, and an escape valve for excess population.

The perception of new opportunity, whether due to technological advance, expanded trade, political change, foreign aid, moving to a richer land, or the disappearance of competitors (who move away or die), encourages larger family size. Families eagerly fill any apparently larger niche, and the extra births and consequent population growth often overshoot actual opportunity.

Increase beyond a sustainable number is an ever-present threat, because human beings take their cue from the opportunity that is apparent *today*, and are easily fooled by change. Relying on what is near in space or time, we calculate with difficulty the long-term momentum of population growth, the limits to future technological advance, and the inexorable progression of resource depletion.

THE encounters with scarcity that are currently being forced upon billions of people by the natural limits of their environment are beginning to correct the consequences of decades of misperception. Now, as it has done many times in human history, the rediscovery of limits is awakening the motivation to limit family size.

The appearance (and short-term reality) of expanding opportunity takes various guises. In the 1950s land redistribution in Turkey led formerly landless peasants to increase significantly the size of their families. Among African Sahel pastoralists, deep-water wells drilled by donor countries in the 1950s and 1960s prompted larger herds of cattle and goats, earlier marriage (because bride-prices are paid in animals and the required number became easier to accumulate), and higher fertility. Similarly, Ireland's widespread cultivation of the potato in the early eighteenth century increased agricultural productivity and encouraged peasants to subdivide portions of their farms into plots for their sons, which in turn promoted younger marriage and a baby boom. Still earlier, between the sixth and ninth centuries, the introduction in Europe of the stirrup, the rigid-collar harness, and nailed horseshoes greatly enhanced the agricultural output of Europe's northern plains. Better nutrition helped lead Europe out of the Dark Ages to economic recovery and thence, from about 1050 to 1350, to a tripling of population size in countries such as England and France.

India offers another example. Its population was nearly stable from 400 B.C. to about A.D. 1600. After the end of the Mogul invasions, and with the advent of new trade opportunities, the population began to grow (at about half the European rate). Later, European trade offered India further opportunity, and population growth accelerated. It took off for the skies shortly after the country shed its colonial status, in 1947; assistance from the USSR, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund bolstered perceptions of a prosperous future, and the rate of population growth accelerated up until about 1980.

Successful independence movements and populist coups are prominent among the kinds of changes that carry the message that times are good and getting better. China commenced its euphoric interlude with the expulsion of the Nationalists, in 1949. Communism triumphed, and its philosophy held that a greater nation required more people. The fertility rate and population size rocketed upward. A mainland-China population that was estimated to be 559 million in 1949 grew to 654 million in 1959, whereas in the preceding 100 years of political turmoil and war the average growth rate of the Chinese population had been just 0.3 percent a year. Both lower mortality and higher fertility contributed to the increase. Judith Banister writes in *China's Changing Population*, "Fertility began rising in the late 1940s, and was near or above 6 births per woman during the years 1952-57, higher fertility than had been customary" in prior decades. Banister attributes China's baby boom to war's end and to government policy: "Land reform of 1950-51 redistributed land to landless peasants and tenant farmers."

Cuba experienced a baby boom when Fidel Castro displaced Fulgencio Batista, in 1959. Castro explicitly prom-

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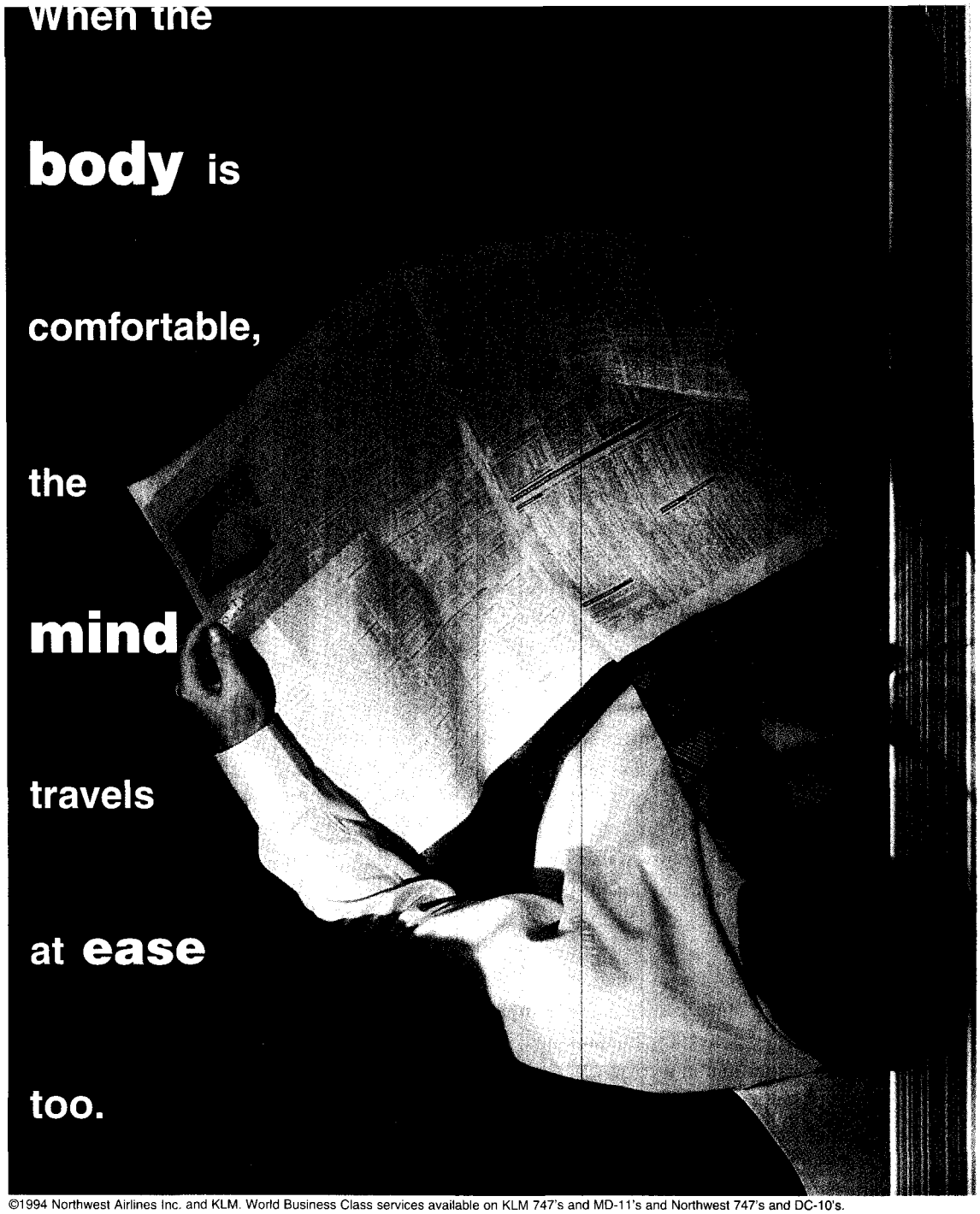

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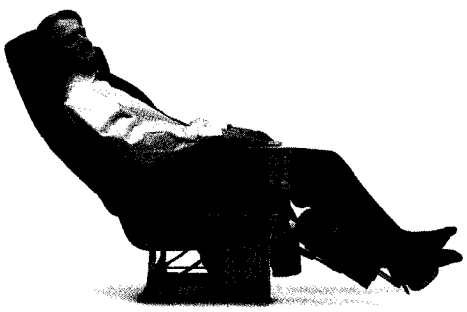

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ised a redistribution of wealth, and according to the demographers S. Díaz-Briquets and L. Pérez, fertility rose in response. Díaz-Briquets and Pérez write, "The main factor was the real income rise among the most disadvantaged groups brought about by the redistribution measures of the revolutionary government. The fertility rises in almost every age group suggest that couples viewed the future as more promising and felt they could now afford more children."

The populations of Algeria, Zimbabwe, and Rwanda grew rapidly around the time colonial powers left. Algeria, for example, achieved independence in 1962, and thirty years later 70 percent of its population was under thirty years of age. Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, and soon achieved one of the highest population-growth rates in the world; the growth was encouraged by the Health Minister, who attacked family planning as a "white colonialist plot" to limit black power.

Because of their effect on family size, development programs entailing large transfers of technology and funds to the Third World have been especially pernicious. This kind of aid is inappropriate because it sends the signal that wealth and opportunity can grow without effort and without limit. That rapid population growth ensues should surprise no one. Africa, which in recent decades has received three times as much foreign aid per capita as any other continent, now also has the highest fertility rates. During the 1950s and 1960s the African fertility rate rose—to almost seven children per woman—at the same time that infant mortality was dramatically reduced, health-care availability grew, literacy for women and men became more widespread, and economic optimism pervaded more and more sectors of society. Extraordinarily high rates of population growth were new to Africa; during the 1950s the Latin American rate had been higher.

Even immigration can affect total world population. Studies of nineteenth-century England and Wales and modern Caribbean societies show that in communities already in the throes of rapid population growth, fertility stays high as long as the option to emigrate exists, whereas fertility falls rapidly in communities that lack such an escape valve. And while fertility rates are falling in most African countries, the rate remains high in Ghana (6.2 births per woman in 1993), perhaps because an established pattern of emigration (one per 1,000 in the population) provides a safety valve for excess numbers. This effect on fertility is consistent with independent reports that emigration raises incomes both among emigrants and among those they leave behind.

In sum, it is true, if awkward, that efforts to alleviate poverty often spur population growth, as does leaving open the door to immigration. Subsidies, windfalls, and the prospect of economic opportunity remove the immediacy of needing to conserve. The mantras of democracy, redistribution, and economic development raise expectations and fertility rates, fostering population growth and thereby steepening a downward environmental and economic spiral.

Despite this fact, certain experts and the public they inform nevertheless wish to believe that fertility rates have traditionally been high worldwide and have declined only in industrialized countries or in countries where modern contraception is available, and that the post–Second World War population explosion is explained mostly by better health and nutrition, which led to rapidly declining mortality rates and slight, involuntary increases in fertility. The possibility that larger family size resulted from wanting more children continues to be denied.

Experts in population studies were the first to be fooled. In the 1930s many demographers predicted a steady decline in population, because the low fertility of Western industrialized countries was attributed to development and modernization rather than to the endemic pessimism brought on by the Great Depression. Still missing the point, many failed to see that the high fertility after the Second World War was a response to the perception of expanding economic opportunity. The U.S. Baby Boom (1947–1961) and the slightly later booms in Western Europe took most demographers by surprise.

THE MESSAGE OF SCARCITY

As it happens, the encounters with scarcity that are currently being forced upon literally billions of people by the natural limits of their environment are beginning to correct the consequences of decades of misperception. The rhetoric of modernization, international development, and egalitarianism is losing its power to mislead. As Europe is revealed to be incapable of alleviating the suffering of the former Yugoslavia, as rich countries in general prove nearly powerless to help the countless distant multitudes, it becomes difficult to believe in rescue. Now, as it has done many times in human history, the rediscovery of limits is awakening the motivation to limit family size.

In Ireland land became scarce relative to the rapidly growing population in the early nineteenth century, whereupon fertility began a retreat to its low, pre-potato level. By 1830 only about two thirds of women married before age twenty-five. Ten percent married this young in 1851—a drastic postponement of marriage in response to the 1846–1851 potato famine. Following a brief recovery, as few as 12 percent married before age twenty-five. The pattern of late marriage persisted from about 1890 through the Second World War. In the United States the Baby Boom ended at about the time the jobs pipeline began to fill; the fertility rate dropped below replacement level after the 1973 oil shock occurred and many Americans' real income stopped rising. In post-revolutionary China population momentum built until famine, unrelieved by Western aid, forced a confrontation with limits. In 1979, mindful of severe food shortages, the government instituted a one-child-per-family policy, thus completing the evolution of

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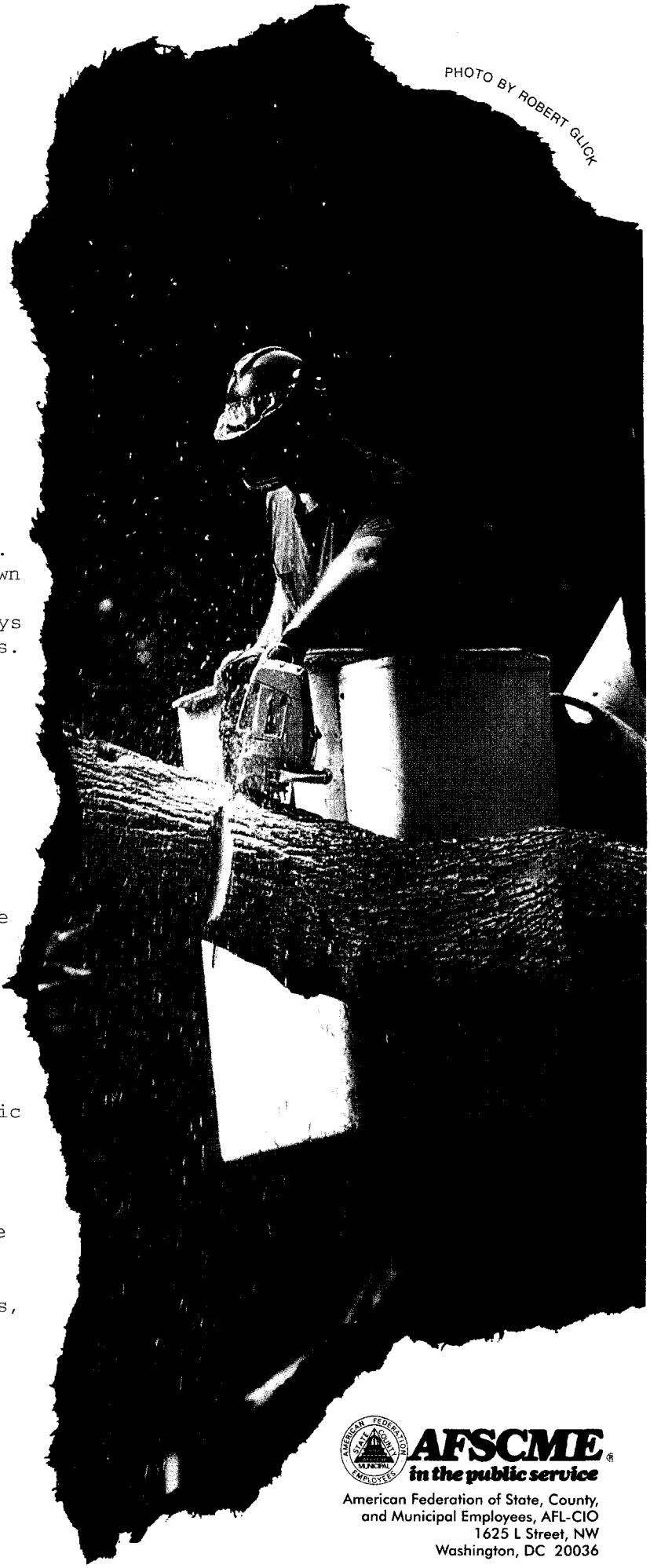

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12 August

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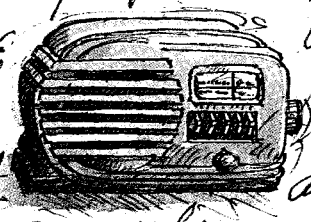

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incentives and controls that returned the country to the pre-Communist pattern of marital and reproductive restraint. In Cuba the Castro-inspired baby boom gave way to below-replacement-level fertility when communism's inability to deliver prosperity became manifest. In Eastern-bloc countries, including Russia, economic restructuring, the dissipation of government consumption subsidies, and the public perception of rising infant mortality have promoted lower fertility rates and created demand for the avoidance of pregnancy.

In Zimbabwe, prodded by the international economic retrenchment of the late 1980s, the government began to support family planning. According to *The Economist*, "The hefty cost of supporting a large family has helped persuade some men of the value of limiting its size." The fertility rate is falling among the Yoruba in Nigeria, owing to a combination of delayed marriage and increasing acceptance of modern contraception. Two thirds of the women who responded to a recent survey said that "the major force behind marriage postponement and the use of contraception to achieve it was the present hard economic conditions."

Elsewhere the demand for modern contraception is also rising, and again the reason seems to be that couples view early marriage and large families as unaffordable. In his new book, *Critical Masses*, the journalist George D. Moffett reports that a mother of two in Mexico defended her use of contraception before a village priest by explaining, "Things are difficult here. A majority of people are having hard times. Jobs are hard to come by." Similarly, a day laborer in Thailand, in the words of Moffett, "would like to have one more child, but he understands that that is beyond his means."

Without the motivation to limit family size, access to modern contraception is nearly irrelevant. For six years in the 1950s a project directed by the British researcher John Wyon provided several villages in northern India with family-planning education, access to contraception, and medical care. The villagers had positive attitudes toward the health-care providers and toward family planning, and infant mortality had fallen way down. But the fertility rate stayed way up.

Wyon's group soon figured out why: the villagers liked large families. They were delighted that now, with lower infant mortality, they could have the six surviving children they had always wanted. The well-funded Wyon project may even have reinforced the preference for large families, by playing a part in making extra children affordable.

THINK LOCALLY

MISCALCULATION about the *cause* of the population explosion has led to irrelevant and even counterproductive strategies for helping the Third World to balance its population size and its resources. In the late 1940s and the heady decades that followed, trade, independence movements, populist revolutions, foreign aid, and new technology made people in all walks of life believe in abundance and an end to the natural limits imposed by the environments with which they were familiar.

Now it is a step forward for industrial nations, their wealth much diminished, to be retrenching and targeting aid more narrowly. Their remaining wealth must not be squandered on arming opposing factions, reckless foreign assistance, or support for international migrations that rob and ultimately enrage—to the point of violence and possibly civil war—resident populations. This retrenchment saddens many, but the former liberality did a disservice to every country targeted for development.

With a new, informed understanding of human responses, certain kinds of aid remain appropriate: microloans that foster grassroots enterprise, where success is substantially related to effort; and assistance with family-planning services, not because contraception is a solution in and of itself but because modern contraception is a humane way of achieving small family size when small family size is desired. This modest agenda remains within the means of industrialized countries even as they look to the needs of the growing ranks of their own poor. And it does not mislead and unintentionally harm intended beneficiaries.

The idea that economic development is the key to curbing world population growth rests on assumptions and assertions that have influenced international aid policy for some fifty years. These assumptions do not stand up to historical or anthropological scrutiny, however, and the policies they have spawned have contributed to runaway population growth.

The human capacity for adaptive response evolved in face-to-face interactions. Humanity's strong suit is quick response to environmental cues—a response more likely to be appropriate when the relevant environment is immediate and local. The mind's horizon is here and now. Our ancestors evolved and had to succeed in small groups that moved around relatively small territories. They had to succeed one day at a time—or not be anyone's ancestors. So, unsurprisingly, signals that come from the local environment are powerfully motivating.

Let the globalists step aside. One-world solutions do not work. Local solutions will. Everywhere people act in accord with their perception of their best interests. People are adept at interpreting *local* signs to find the *next* move needed. In many countries and communities today, where social, economic, and environmental conditions are indubitably worsening, the demand for modern contraception is rising, marriage and sexual initiation are delayed, and family size is contracting. Individuals responding with low fertility to signs of limits are the local solution. One prays that the hucksters of inappropriate development do not mess this up. ❦

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When ackled everything else life certainly isn't going to

If you spend your life studying physics, you learn complex and incredible things. Like why the earth spins around the sun. How airplanes fly. Or what makes hundreds of cars traveling at 55 mph stop every Friday afternoon at 5:15.

But a scientist like June Rooks (June is an operations research analyst for the military) doesn't let life's mysteries bog her down. She's just, well, fascinated by them. (June has the kind of mind that never stops moving.)

So when it came time to buy a new car, you'd expect June to make a very calculated study of it. Instead, June went to the auto show, where she saw a Saturn SL1. And it was love at first sight. An emotional, if unlikely, response from a keen analytical mind like June's.

Later, at the Saturn retailer, June found the whole experience was so easy that she made a decision to buy right on the spot. Impulsive behavior for a scientist of June's stature. But you can't spend your whole life in a laboratory. A lot of it (just ask June), you spend in traffic. And you might as well enjoy it.

June Rooks bought her Saturn SL1 at Saturn of Bakersfield.

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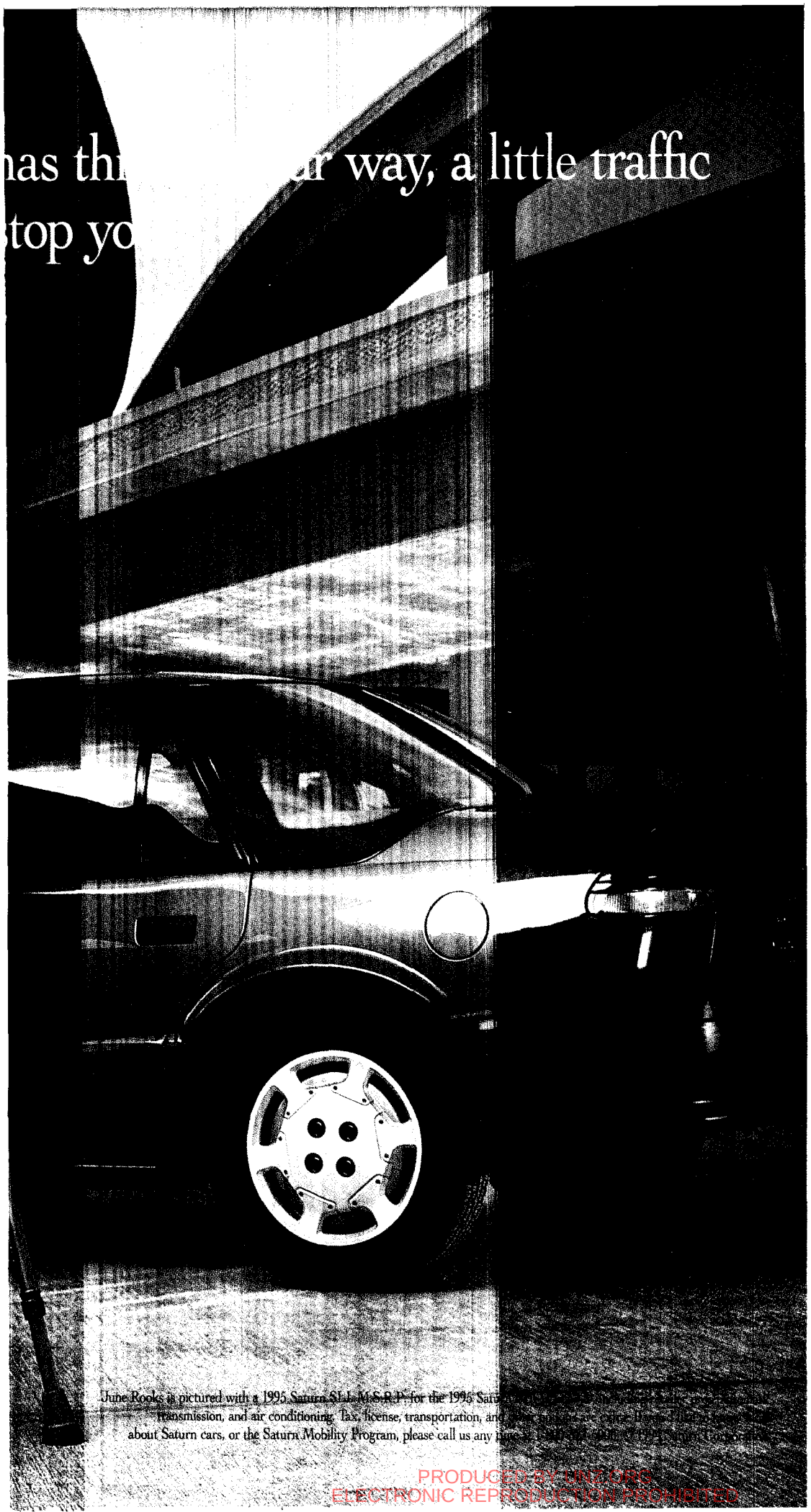

June Rooks is pictured with a 1995 Saturn SL1. M.S.R.P. for the 1995 Sat[illegible] transmission, and air conditioning. Tax, license, transportation, and [illegible] about Saturn cars, or the Saturn Mobility Program, please call us any [illegible]

The Saturn Mobility Program helps make sure there's more than one way to drive a Saturn. June's SL1 was adapted with hand

controls. And when the car was delivered to her, it came with a very nice surprise. The Saturn Mobility Program reimbursed June for all the necessary work. (In fact, the program will pay up to $1,000 for such special adaptations.) Of course, like anyone in Southern California, when June is stuck in traffic, what she really appreciates is the air conditioning.

SATURN

A Different Kind of Company. A Different Kind of Car.

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Somebody Up There Likes Me

by RALPH LOMBREGLIA

Some people say that when a woman moves 1,500 miles from her mate to get a Ph.D. in women's studies, it's the beginning of the end

I LOGGED on and got a Network fortune cookie, followed by E-mail from my distant wife.

Afternoon favorable for romance. Try a single person for a change.

Date: Mon, 12 Apr 99 14:27 GMT
From: Snookie Lee Ludlow <snooks@women.tex.edu>
To: Dante Allegro Annunziata <dante@media.sjcm.edu>
Subject: RE: For your delectation

Dante,

Your last missive was so cold, I thought somebody sent me an Alaskan sockeye salmon. Then I saw on TV where the sockeye's extinct, so now I don't know what your problem is.

Stop hurting people, you monster.

Snooks

I was on the old mainframe terminal in my office at school, surrounded by cinder-block walls and shelves stuffed chaotically with tapes and disks. I hadn't seen a friendly face in a week. Sometimes when I was down, the random-sentence generator cheered me up, so I knocked off a few new ones.

The president's unlikely urchin is tripping.
The awful dogs are howling.
Couldn't robots dine on jurisprudence?
And why shouldn't buildings puzzle over people?

You could feed the generator your own personal glossary of terms.

Vengeful Snookie bubbles San Antone into flames while academic watchmen practice celestial sloth in bed.

In my last mail to Snookie Lee, I had sent some morsels like these—affectionately, to make her smile—and she'd taken them all wrong: the whole story of Snooks and me. She was in San Antonio and I was in San Jose, and some people say that when a woman moves 1,500 miles from her mate to get a Ph.D. in women's studies, it's the beginning of the end, if not the end of the end, and refuting those prophets of woe is not easy. Yes, we had taken some bad falls, Snookie Lee and I. We were edging into the Humpty Dumpty zone. But I thought we could put it together again, and I was doing my best to convince Snookie of that.

<flame on>
MY letter was cold! Ha! You've been like ice! Maybe *my* feelings are hurt! I'm the loyal and true one! I'm the one who acts like he cares! You're the one who's trying to dump the whole thing down the sewer!
<flame off>

I made my computer do anagrams of your sweet name, Snooks—about 100,000 before I pulled the plug. Then I spent a whole day picking my favorites when I was supposed to be grading papers. Do men do this if they're not in love?

Like, elude solo now. Loud, sleek loin woe. Look, we use old line. Woo skill elude one. I use lone lewd look. Look, Lee, we sin loud. Oil noose well, Duke. Look, Lee, widen soul. Would Snook Lee lie? Look, slow Lee due in.

Do lie low, keen soul,

Dante

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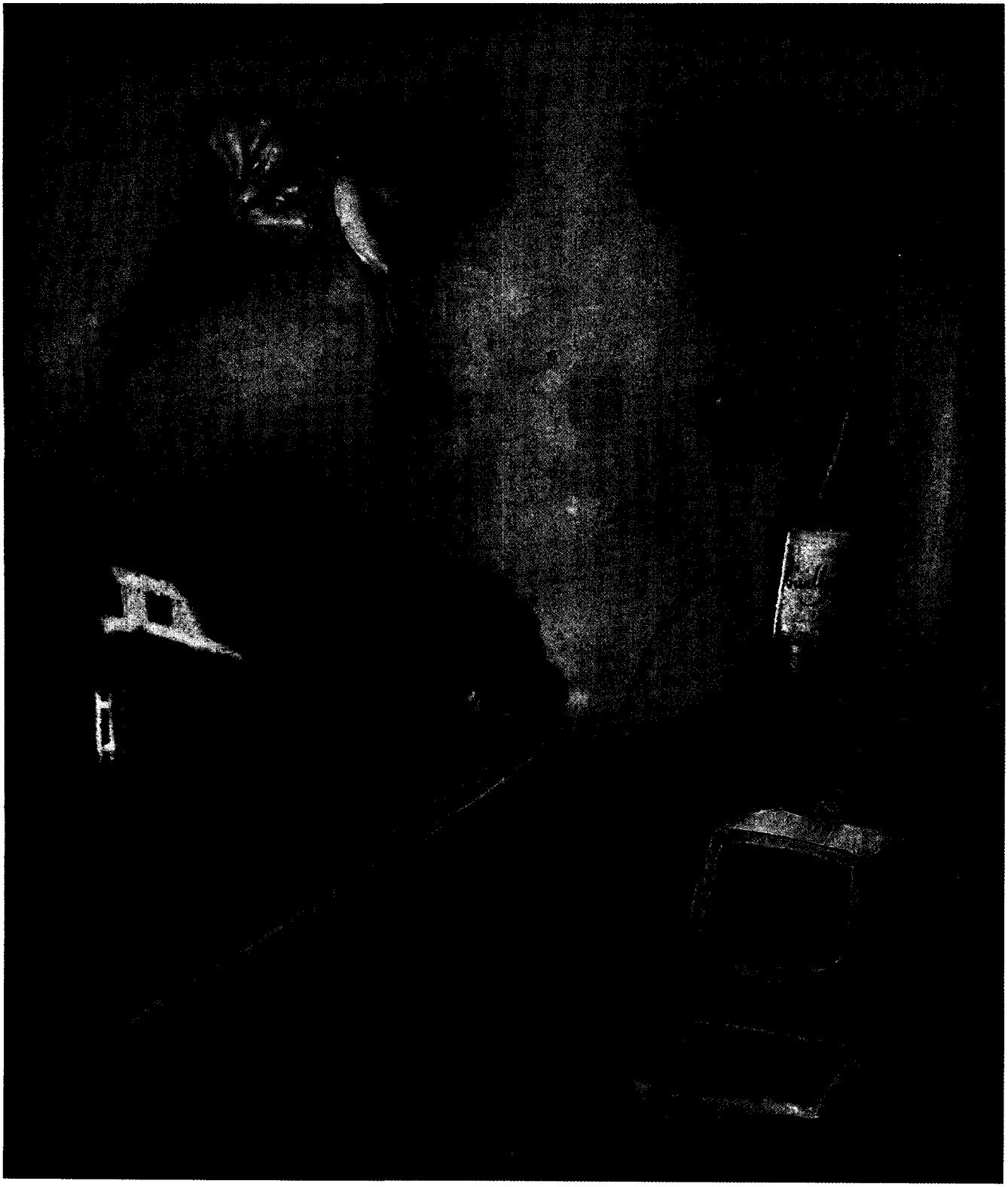

Besides Snookie's letter I had four from Mary Beth—three from last week, which I had not read, and a new one posted early this morning, all bearing the subject line "Your position here"—and I could have gone on to read them now, but I wasn't in the mood. Mary Beth was the chair of language and media studies at San Jose College of the Mind, where I was a junior professor. She was also out to get me. Indeed, Mary Beth's machinations were part of the reason that Snookie was gone. Snooks had wanted to teach too, to chisel those young minds, and she deserved her chance. Not only did she have sufficient credentials, but she had more heart than the whole College of the Mind put together. But Mary Beth wouldn't give her even a section of Mastering Capitalistic Prose. I volunteered to give her a section of mine, and Mary Beth said

Illustrations by Andrzej Dudzinski

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no. When they offered me the position, they said I'd come up for tenure in three or four years; after Snooks applied to teach, Mary Beth took me off the tenure track.

I MET Snooks at a poetry slam in 1995, when I was finishing my graduate media degree at MIT. She was up from Alabama to show them a thing or two at Harvard, where she had made it all the way to her senior year. Somehow we never crossed paths in Cambridge, though she was all over town and hard to miss. We slammed, finally, in the bowels of Boston, in a basement bookstore on Newbury Street, where Snookie Lee declaimed verses of outrage and indignation while shaking her spiky hair and waving Simone Weil at the audience. They loved her. I had to follow her on with my sheaf of technological rhapsodies. They hated me. But the opinion I cared about was Snookie Lee's. I sidled up to her after the gig and asked what she thought of my stuff. She hated it, but she loved my name. On the strength of that, I asked her out. "I've got a date with Dante!" she said, laughing, to one of her girlfriends.

She was all bluff and flying feathers, and then she was my everything. We graduated and I got the offer from College of the Mind, and since my fellow Ph.D.s seemed ready to slit my throat for the job, I took it. Snookie said she would follow me if I promised it was nice. My best childhood friend, Boyce Hoodington, had lived twenty miles north, in Palo Alto, for years, and he loved it out there. He was a project leader for a company trying to simulate human consciousness with a computer. Many California outfits were trying to do that, without much luck, but Boyce's firm had achieved a few small, sexy triumphs that kept the investors turned on. The firm's computer now recognized specific people when they walked into the room, greeted them, and commented on the clothes they were wearing. It could do other things, Boyce had told me—things he wasn't allowed to talk about.

So I promised Snookie she'd like California, and we lived there for three incredibly crummy years—crummy for me, the indentured professor in the house, thermonuclear for Snooks. Our problems went beyond Mary Beth. We experienced other disillusionments, too, such as the discovery that certain faculty couples masquerading as our friends were doing us dirty behind the scenes. Looking back on it, trying to fix the damage by getting married was not the best idea. Snookie said so at the time. I won't say that in those dark days when she didn't get out of bed till 4:00 P.M., and never took off her robe, and College of the Mind was leaking its acid into my brain, I was Jovian about it. But I still think that in the disappointing run of men I'm a prize.

I told all this to Snookie Lee as we stood on the dead lawn of our rented bungalow, her ancient, eggplant-colored Le Car parked halfway up on the sidewalk, stuffed full of her things. She was going to San Antonio to get her own Ph.D. In the last year of our three Snooks ended up as a night-shift checkout girl at a discount drug superstore, and the worst thing was, she liked it. She stopped blaming me for ruining her life. She now said that I'd inadvertently brought about her rebirth. She'd made a lot of new girlfriends at the store, muscular young women who weren't ever going to College of the Mind or college of the anything, and Snooks would go aerobic dancing and skating with them. She decided that the best thing in life was sisterhood. I hardly ever saw her anymore. On our separation day her friends spun over on their blades to bid Snookie Lee good-bye. They stood wobbling on the brown grass in their colorful tights and kneepads, saying supportive things to Snooks and giving bad looks to me.

I said, "Sisterhood means a lot to me, too, you know." The women had a good guffaw over that. I told Snooks she was breaking my heart.

She said, "You know those plastic ant-farm things? How you buy one, and then later decide you don't really want ants after all, and you empty the whole thing out on the ground? That's heartbreak, Dante. For the ants, I mean. You're not heartbroken. You don't even look sad."

"I'm very Goddamn heartbroken," I said. "Don't tell me how heartbroken I am." The girlfriends rolled closer to Snookie Lee. I *was* heartbroken, but Snookie and I had beaten each other down so badly that our parting scene was playing like dinner theater. "And that analogy's no good," I told her. "Those ant-farm ants are an exotic breed that can't live in the wild. Otherwise they wouldn't *be* heartbroken. They'd be happy. They'd be free."

"You're free," Snookie Lee said.

"I never asked to be free! I'm exotic!" I exclaimed, but I got nowhere. Snookie Lee drove away.

I was about to log off when my terminal chirped and said, in its silly voice, "*You have new mail.*" I hoped the message was from her. If she was online, maybe I could ping her for a real-time chat. But the letter turned out to be from Boyce. I punched it up.

Date: Mon, 12 Apr 99 20:53 GMT
From: Boyce P. Hoodington <boyce@softbrain.com>
To: Dante Allegro Annunziata <dante@media.sjcm.edu>
Subject: Death and pasta

Would have got back to you sooner, but I died. Have not logged on in days, and now speak to you from the beyond. My #*^!%!* computer went down like the Hindenburg—cellular port hosed, motherboard toasted. I'm on the dusty laptop now, shades of Orville Wright. It periodically stalls out and drops through the clouds of our thrilling but turbulent present-day network. If I suddenly disappear, that's why.

I must have a new box, Dante! Let's shop for it together! Tonight, after partaking of a momentous baked ziti. Mounds of baby peas, asparagus, and musky salad greens from the garden have turned our kitchen into a Tuscan stone cottage. I may videodisk it, it's so beautiful. But Janet regards me strangely when I videodisk food. And

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wait till you taste this fresh-faced fumé with overtones of apple and pear. Spanking beverage. Bought a case. Snatched a spicy zinfandel, too. Come on up!—BPH

P.S. I'll tell my sad corporate story. Slithering beast of commerce, it's a snakepit out here. Be thankful you chose the cloistered life.

P.P.S. We must talk about Snookie. You don't sound good, my brother. Janet has thoughts for you. Never mind free enterprise, Dante; women are the great challenge of our lives, the parabolic arena where we Rollerblade like angels at the speed of light, and where, I fear, we are destined to wipe out grotesquely. Yet we skate on blindly into the night. Why? Because of love, that hot transistor smoking within us.

My office hours at College of the Mind had another hour to run, but not a single student had come to see me so far. True, my door was closed and locked, and I was being very quiet. My lights were off. If I left now, I could go home and take a shower, change into my jeans (Mary Beth forbade teaching in jeans), and still make it to Boyce's for happy hour. I blowgunned my answer into the bitstream—

I Brake for Baked Ziti

—and was yet again on the cusp of logging off when I remembered the text-dissociation software they had on the server. It could sometimes ease the misery inflicted upon people by words. I gave it Snookie's letter to eat.

St. Dante,

I, thou monster. I saw on Sockeye TV where the salmon is cold. Cold, cold, cold. I thought somebody sent me an Alaskan Salmonster, but now I don't know what your last missive was. Your problem's extinct, you hurting salmon.

You, monstero, the Sockeye Salmolast.

Salmonstop,

Snooksego

It didn't kill much pain, but I sent it to her anyway.

I DROVE my Fuji Chroma up 280 from San Jose to Palo Alto amid contorted oaks on hilltops, like bonsai trees in amber waves of grain, except the waves weren't grain, they were dead meadow grass, two or three feet high and browned-out from drought, emblem of our republic. Also a fire hazard that should have been mowed down. A red-tailed hawk sailed from a knobby tree, plunged to the undulating grass, and flapped back to its branch with mythic pumps of the wings, taking a field mouse on a commuter hop to God.

The foothills reminded me of hobbit-land, furry café-au-lait knolls where Frodo, Gandalf, et al., would have felt at home. Zipping up the artery in my tiny car, I succumbed to a conviction that hobbits were living there now, in burrows beneath the gnomish topography. The old Tolkien books—the interactive laser-disk versions—had lately made a great comeback with students, and I'd been using them in my classes at College of the Mind. For doing that and certain other groovy things, I was considered a cool professor, and my sections never failed to fill up. I got glowing reviews in the campus electronic magazine, to the profound irritation of Mary Beth, whose classes the students routinely panned. And yet educating endless waves of the young had begun to unnerve me. The act of teaching unnerved everyone eventually, but usually because your students were always nineteen while you withered into your grave before their eyes. My problem was different—I remained the same while they mutated into a different species. My students implanted digital watches in the skin of their wrists, tattooed and barbered themselves so as not to appear human, took personalized drugs made from their own DNA, and danced epileptically to industrial noise. I fantasized about taking them on a field trip to the foothills for the semester-wrap picnic and then, in the thick of the hobbit hunt, vanishing—never to be seen again. Perhaps they'd start a religion based on the mystery of my disappearance. Perhaps spirituality would flower on earth once more.

When I pulled up to Boyce's, his front lawn was preternaturally thick and green, like a gigantic flattop haircut for St. Patrick's Day. He and Janet loved landscaping and were always ministering to their lawn. I wished I had a nice house and yard like theirs. Actually, I wished I had anything. It hit me that I should enter the private sector, like Boyce, where your bosses didn't punish you for doing your job. I found him in his modern, shiny kitchen at the back of the house, assembling a fine baked ziti in a big casserole dish. He was a North Carolina Methodist, supposedly, but some Mediterranean blood had got in there somehow. The man could cook. "Romano!" he said in greeting, pointing to a quarter wheel of the stuff.

"I got E-mail from Snookie today," I said, grating the cheese.

"Excellent!" Boyce said. "You're talking! What did she say?"

"That I was a monster."

"All women say that about men, Dante. It's a figure of speech."

"What does it mean?"

"It means we're monsters."

We built the ziti and slid it into the oven. Boyce poured us big goblets of fumé. "To a new life for us all."

We clinked and sipped. "What do you want a new life for?" I asked.

"I meant the new one we're all getting, want it or not."

"What happened?"

"Tell you outside. Where nature can absorb the toxins."

We took our glasses to the verdant back yard. Boyce and Janet had a triple-depth lot—150 feet of Palo Alto crust in which Boyce had laid drip-irrigation lines, so that now

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it looked like the Garden of Eden back there. Lemons and limes and oranges hung over our heads at the round terrace table. Zippy the hummingbird was doing his air-and-space show, flashing in from nowhere to sip at his feeder, and then buzzing our heads before zinging back to the treetop where he lived. The little nugget of his beelike body stood in relief against the sky, microscopic stud on a eucalyptus branch.

"You can't see the knife?" Boyce said, twisting to show me his back.

I looked around him. "You've got it hidden pretty well."

"I'm out."

"Of what?"

"SoftBrain Technologies."

"What? You were in charge of the whole project. It was your division."

"The division they lopped off in the corporate downsizing."

"They lop off whole divisions?"

"That was the normal part. The stinky part was tricking me into lopping it for them."

And then Boyce told his tale. Nearly a year before, without telling him, his bosses had cut a deal to sell the consciousness-emulation division. The buyers thought they were paying too much and wanted something extra thrown in, something big and sweet. Boyce was assigned a strange and urgent top-secret task, on which he worked his heart out until just the week before—working, though he didn't know it, for his own extinction. I demanded that he tell me this top-secret thing.

"Oh, it was so typical. So depressingly superficial. Nothing. They wanted to see the computer hold a credible conversation."

"But it's been doing that for years."

"Not with its lips."

"*Lips*! It has *lips*? I didn't know it had lips!"

"I just violated my nondisclosure agreement. Don't spread that around."

"Lips!"

Monday of the previous week, at 9:00 A.M., Boyce had demoed the lips for the company brass and some invited guests with English accents. The lips were gorgeous. Everybody loved the lips. The brass congratulated Boyce in a way that implied a promotion and a load of stock. He returned to his office to pop corks with the team, though it was only coffee-break time. He felt the burgeoning glory of his division, soon to be the company jewel. At 3:00 P.M. he got the call to close it down. The British guests were the buyers. They were taking the sucker to England, lips and all.

It took me a minute to absorb this slimy information. "But they *liked* you," I said at last.

"Oh, they still do," Boyce said. "They love me. I'm a great guy."

In the week since his severance he'd been home in seclusion, drinking boutique wine and having his spine realigned by a private masseuse. Only this morning had Boyce awakened with a craving to re-enter the world.

"How's Janet taking it?"

"Overjoyed. She thinks I've been miraculously spared from my own worst tendencies. She thinks I was going corporate—me, of all people."

"Were you?"

"Of course I wasn't! I thought the lips were stupid. Here we were on the trail of consciousness itself, and all the managers cared about was lips."

"Humanity's signal-to-noise ratio isn't so hot, is it?"

"Worst in the animal kingdom. By a mile."

"But we've put out some pretty clean signal, too," I said reflectively. "Over the years. Down through the centuries. It adds up."

Boyce slapped my arm. "That's what I woke up this morning thinking!" he exclaimed. "That's what I've learned from all this!"

"What?"

"That everything we've done with computers until now is totally trivial and wrong! Why have we not yet created a fantastic, free, self-reflective knowledge base of every good thing humanity has ever thought or dreamed? Not just consciousness, Dante. *Cosmic* consciousness! That's what I want to build now. The computerized mind of the world!"

"And you say Janet's not worried about you?"

"She doesn't know yet. She'll love it when I explain it. I kind of got the idea from her, in fact. But since you mention it, it's you she's worried about."

Fumé went up my nose and fizzed my sinuses. "*Me?*"

"She wants me to watch you very closely. She thinks you may do some harm to yourself."

One is rarely prepared to meet the shabby figure one actually cuts in the world, even if one already has a pretty clear

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mental image of the wretch. "You don't think that, do you, Boyce?"

"Would it make you feel better or worse if I did?"

"Worse. Definitely worse."

"Then I don't."

My harming myself was a silly idea, but it was nice to have friends who considered me a walking pipe bomb and yet continued to care. True, that was practically Janet's job: she was a Jungian therapist, not to mention a splendid woman at whose sagacious feet I should probably throw myself for guidance. She was certainly the best thing that ever happened to Boyce, and her wonderfulness made me wish that I had a wife too. Then I remembered—I did.

"Can I use your Chokecherry to check my mail?" I asked Boyce.

"Be my guest, but it might not even get you on. I had a hell of a time with it today. A few keys are falling off, too."

"I'll nurse it along."

"Try slapping it."

I ducked the pendulous oranges and crossed the back yard beneath fantastical shapes in the California clouds, smiling at the idea of Boyce's still using the old Chokecherry 100. The kitchen was like a lung filled with baked ziti's life-affirming breath. I walked through it and on into the darkened living and dining rooms, where the recently restuccoed walls were already cracked again from tremors. In Boyce's study the big computer lay dead on its table, the little Chokecherry sleeping beside it and waking up reluctantly when I touched its wobbly keys. Once, people had thrilled to own this little appliance of the brain. True to its name, it choked when I logged on, but I lashed it forward with repeated jabs of the Escape key. It tried to read me the fortune cookie that appeared on the screen, but the loudspeaker was broken and the latest assessment of my destiny sounded like a faltering Bronx cheer.

> It may be that your whole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.

And then my one new letter flashed onto the gray wafer of screen. It was from Snookie Lee.

> Date: Mon, 12 Apr 99 21:09 GMT
>
> From: Snookie Lee Ludlow <snooks@women.tex.edu>
>
> To: Dante Allegro Annunziata <dante@media.sjcm.edu>
>
> Subject: RE: Dissociated Love
>
> Dante,
>
> I'm going nuts and you're helping me do it. You're helping quite nicely.
>
> What was that stuff you sent? "Salmonstop" and all that. "Snooksego." What was that supposed to be? I don't understand your problem anymore. I used to think I did. I'm not studying to be a shrink. I'm studying to be a scholar, which I now realize means I need a shrink myself. Maybe yours would take me on; she's used to people with bullet holes in their feet AND their heads.
>
> Would Snook Lee lie? No, she wouldn't. I'm taking my orals an hour from now. You'll claim you didn't know, though I've told you numerous times. You don't listen when I talk. I'm not nervous. Nerves are not why I feel like barfing. I feel like Polly, the girl who wanted a cracker. They've stuffed me full of their theories, and now they want me to spit them back. But I don't even believe in half that stuff. More than half. My professors aren't bad people, they just turn their students into apes. No, they don't do it, this system does it! This rotten system! I hate it!
>
> But why am I telling you this? You're an ape yourself!
>
> This is what I've been living with. I would've told you before, but I, for one, don't believe in throwing up on people. I gotta go.
>
> Snooks
>
> P.S. Get help.

From the time-stamp on Snookie's letter, I figured her orals were over by now. I clacked out my answer on Boyce's broken keys.

> I'm up at Boyce's for dinner. I'm sorry you're not getting this before your exams. I would have wished you luck. You never told me they were today! You didn't! This is something you're always doing, telling me you told me things when you didn't tell me.
>
> You were having pre-exam hysteria, Snooks—all that stuff about spitting back theories and whatnot. Classic symptoms. Just calm down and be yourself and you'll do fine. God, what saccharine advice. Fortunately, you didn't get it. If you're reading this, it's all over, and you did just fine, didn't you? Academia does this to people, Snooks. I, for one, am getting out.
>
> When you have your Ph.D., I'll work in the drugstore and you can teach college! I can't wait!
>
> I am not an ape and you know it.
>
> Love, love, love,
>
> Dante
>
> P.S. Remember Boyce's incredible baked ziti? It's in the oven right now. And then we're going computer shopping for him. I'm gonna call you later.

I shot my letter into the colossal web of the Net. When I looked up, Janet was standing in the door. "Fixing Boyce's computer?" she said.

"Hi. No, I was just saying something to Snookie Lee."

Janet looked around. "Snookie's here?"

"I meant I was E-mailing her."

"Oh, E-mail. Not talking on the videophone?" We giggled over that for a second. Janet famously loathed all technology after the fountain pen. "Boyce thought the little computer was broken too," she said.

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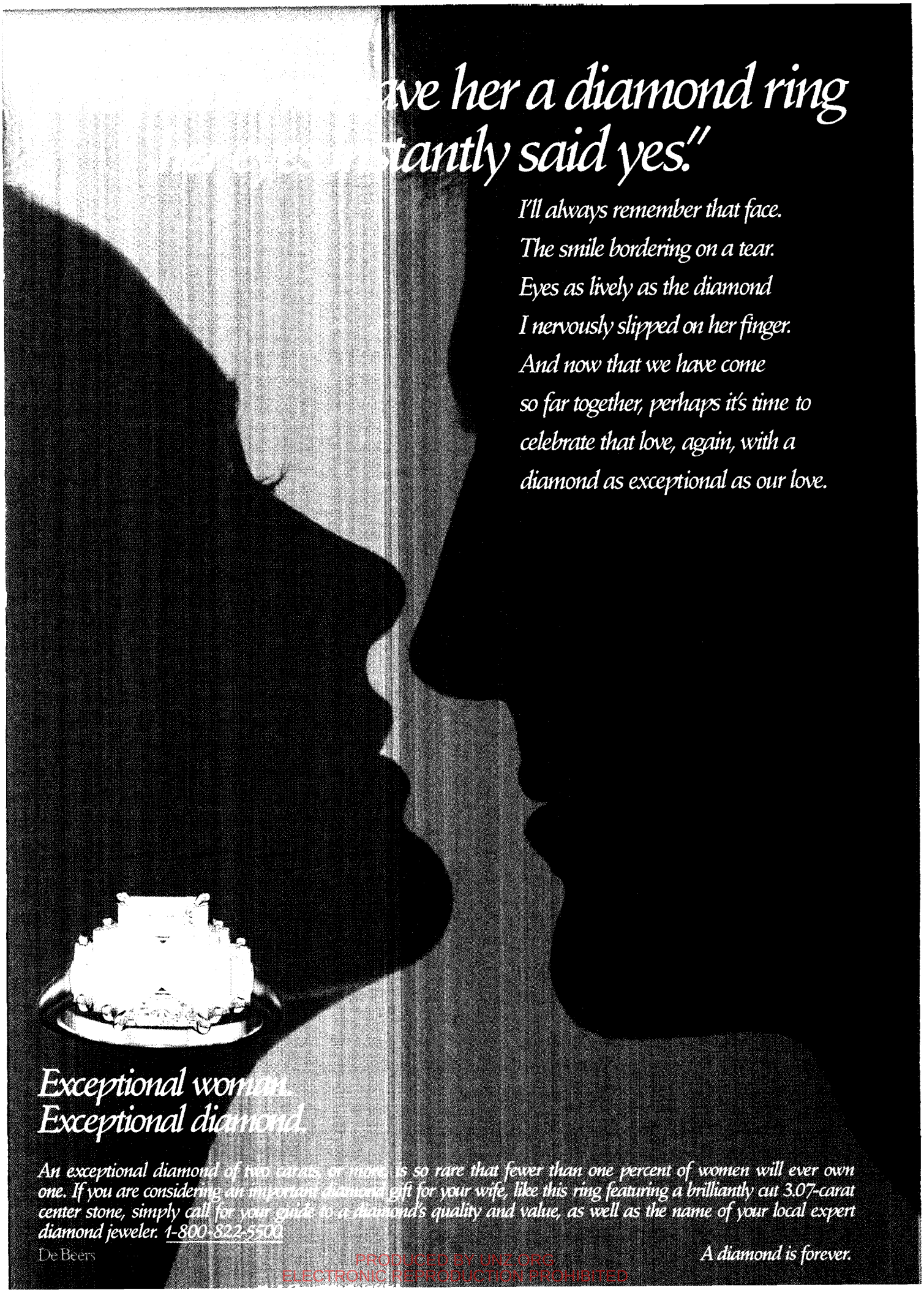

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"It is, Janet. Just because you can answer your mail doesn't mean a computer works. See?" I picked up the Chokecherry and turned it upside down. Five or six keys fell off and a guitar pick dropped out. "He needs a new computer."

"I've heard. Well, you're communicating, at least."

"Of course we're communicating," I said, skeptical that Janet really considered Boyce's layoff a great development. "I'm here, aren't I? But it would be a hell of a lot easier with a better computer."

"Oh, I'm sure a better computer would help immensely. When was the last time you told her you loved her?"

"I thought we were talking about Boyce."

"We were clearly talking about Snookie Lee."

"We were talking about Boyce and computers! You shrinks always do that."

"What?"

"That! Ambush people."

"Have you told Snookie you loved her any time in the past two years?"

"Of course I have."

"She says you haven't."

"Goddamn gossip!" I cried, and threw the Chokecherry onto Boyce's desk. It broke in two pieces. "When did she tell you that? You two have been talking? What else did she say?"

"Plenty."

IN Boyce's ziti the asparagus had given itself to the pasta like a submissive lover. The food was so ambrosial that we didn't even need the spicy zin, though we drank it anyway. My own baked ziti never came out nearly this good, and I was the Italian one. In my present frame of mind I could take a thing like that hard, as a comment on my general integrity.

"Did you know that Janet has serious misgivings about us, Dante?" Boyce asked. "About our relentless fascination with technological goods, the way machines work, what's the latest thing." We were having dinner outside, at the round redwood

---

BORED

All those times I was bored
out of my mind. Holding the log
while he sawed it. Holding
the string while he measured, boards,
distances between things, or pounded
stakes into the ground for rows and rows
of lettuces and beets, which I then (bored)
weeded. Or sat in the back
of the car, or sat still in boats,
sat, sat, while at the prow, stern, wheel
he drove, steered, paddled. It
wasn't even boredom, it was looking,
looking hard and up close at the small
details. Myopia. The worn gunwales,
the intricate twill of the seat
cover. The acid crumbs of loam, the granular
pink rock, its igneous veins, the sea-fans
of dry moss, the blackish and then the graying
bristles on the back of his neck.
Sometimes he would whistle, sometimes
I would. The boring rhythm of doing
things over and over, carrying
the wood, drying
the dishes. Such minutiae. It's what
the animals spend most of their time at,
ferrying the sand, grain by grain, from their tunnels,
shuffling the leaves in their burrows. He pointed
such things out, and I would look
at the whorled texture of his square finger, earth under
the nail. Why do I remember it as sunnier
all the time then, although it more often
rained, and more birdsong?
I could hardly wait to get
the hell out of there to
anywhere else. Perhaps though
boredom is happier. It is for dogs or
groundhogs. Now I wouldn't be bored.
Now I would know too much.
Now I would know.

—MARGARET ATWOOD

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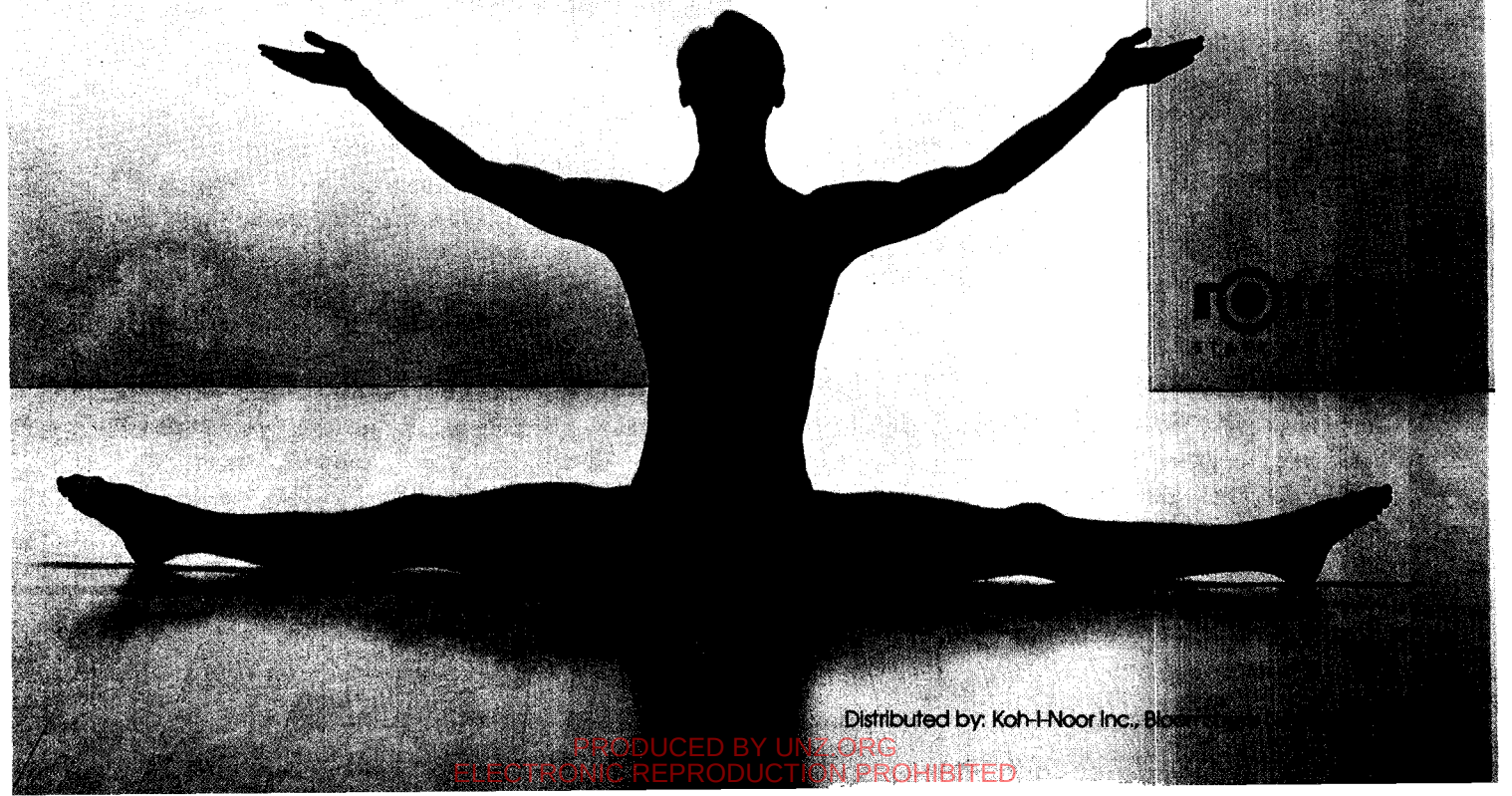

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table, where I sat between Boyce and Janet, opposite the empty fourth chair. "Something about it is fishy, she thinks."

"I didn't know that," I said.

"Yes, I may start studying you two," Janet said. "I may write a book on this phenomenon."

Janet had her own private practice full of wealthy clients. She wasn't jumping through flaming tenure hoops under the stony gaze of some Mary Beth, and yet she still had thoughts of writing books. What pluck!

"Why do you know so much about computers?" she asked me. "Him I can understand. But you're supposed to be a humanities guy."

"Fear of death," I said. "Sexual terror."

"Nice try."

"Because he knew I'd need a new one someday," Boyce said, "and he wanted to help me pick it out."

"Good, Boyce," I said. "Right. But follow through. What kind of computer would you like? You haven't told us."

"A Revelation 2000."

This magical product name buzzed past my ear with such an unreal twang that I looked around to see if little Zippy had just gone by again. The Revelation 2000 was the first microcomputer with a holographic screen, 1,000-bit audio/video, three billion instructions per second, and direct wireless uplink to geosynchronous satellites. It was the sexiest hardware you could put on a desk. And though I personally subscribed to the old chestnut about buying computers—get the most iron they'll let you charge on your card, and if you can't use all that power, you're doing something wrong—I couldn't believe Boyce was talking about a Rev 2K. "Revelations cost a fortune," I said.

"I've got one lined up for three thousand bucks."

"Bull, Boyce! They're twenty times that."

"My man has one for three."

"What man?"

"This guy Mickey. I've never met him. He's a friend of Brubaker's."

"Oh, no, Boyce. No."

"Honey," Janet said, "I don't think 'Brubaker' was the correct magic word."

"You said you were never dealing with Brubaker again."

"It's a *friend* of his, Dante. Plus, I'm a big boy now."

"He's saying I'm being too protective," I said to Janet.

"That seems to be it," she said.

Brubaker was an avatar of free enterprise who'd been in bed at one time or another with almost every breathing being doing business in the Valley. Like countless others, Boyce had worked for the mythical Bru. Unlike most, he remained on friendly terms with Brubaker after the experience, but then, Boyce was friends with everybody. Brubaker had seen the high times, and now he was researching the lows. He'd been charged with various white-collar crimes in recent years, wriggling off every time except the last, when they popped him for soliciting capital investment without a prospectus. He got a hefty fine and sixty days of community service—which he discharged by teaching street youths to set up their own "S" corporations.

"Stolen goods," I said to Boyce. "Hijacked tractor-trailer."

"You know I wouldn't do that."

"How does Brubaker meet these people?"

"I don't ask."

"That's the understanding you have?"

"No, I don't ask because he'd tell me."

"Since when is three thousand dollars cheap?" Janet said.

"Last computer I'll ever buy, honey," Boyce told her. "Cross my heart."

"Are you going to use it to change the world?"

"You're reading my mind."

"All right, then, you can have it," she said, sipping her zinfandel and staring into the reddening California sky. "I think I'll call my book *Modern Man in Search of a Dumpster for His Soul*."

Boyce turned to me. "And you were upset about being called a monster."

I WAS halfway to the street when I realized that Boyce wasn't behind me. He was standing on his Crayola-green lawn, under the lady's-slipper-colored dome of California sky, staring at my cerulean vehicle parked at the curb in the striated shadow of a mimosa tree. "Do I look like I can ride in a Chroma?" he said. I was forgetting that Boyce, six foot four, couldn't even get into the freeway bubble I drove. I joined him on the lawn leading to his car. The sprinklers popped up and sprayed our legs like mechanical cats. "The downside of homeownership," Boyce called out, as we dashed off his effervescing grass.

"You finally get a pot to pee in, and it pees on you." We made it back to the sidewalk and shook our ankles. "Still, I wouldn't mind. A little pot to pee in with Snookie Lee. But I guess SoftBrain Technologies won't have a gig for me now."

"I guess not, cowboy. You wanted one?"

"I was thinking maybe technical writer."

"Impeccable sense of timing, Dante."

His silver Kodak Image hulked in the transcendental evening light. The automobile was so large it seemed designed to lure Japan into the quicksand with us once and for all—the two rivals going down in a cruise-controlled death embrace. When we approached it, the driver's door slid open, but not mine. "Look at that," I said. "It didn't do my side. A snoutful of microchips and it can't even open the door."

"You have to stand where it can see you, dude."

I walked to the passenger side, and the door retracted with an overdesigned hermetic suck. "My Chroma sees me no matter where I am," I said. When we were gliding through the peaceful streets, pastel homes clicking by like Necco wafers, I said, "So. Mickey."

"Brubaker says the overall impression is of an alienated

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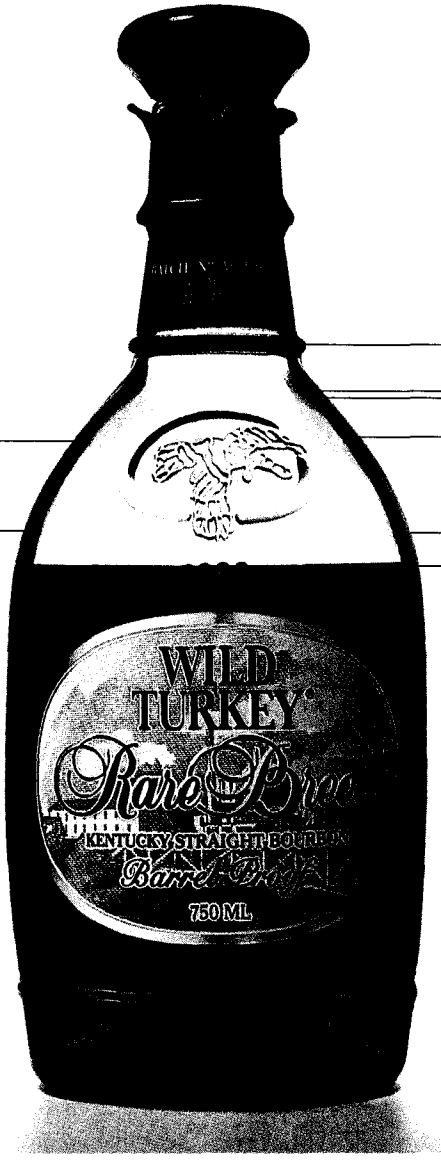
Buxom country star's tour bus breaks down in front of your house.

Aunt Minnie forgot to fix her traditional Rocky Mountain Oyster Soup for Thanksgiving.

The twister didn't touch down.

Cat eats neighbor's Chihuahua.



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vet. But in fact Mickey is not a vet. Not of any actual war."

"He's in a private militia?"

"No, just the opposite. Mickey wouldn't join any organized anything. He's a loner. He's this guy who came out the other side of the Valley dream."

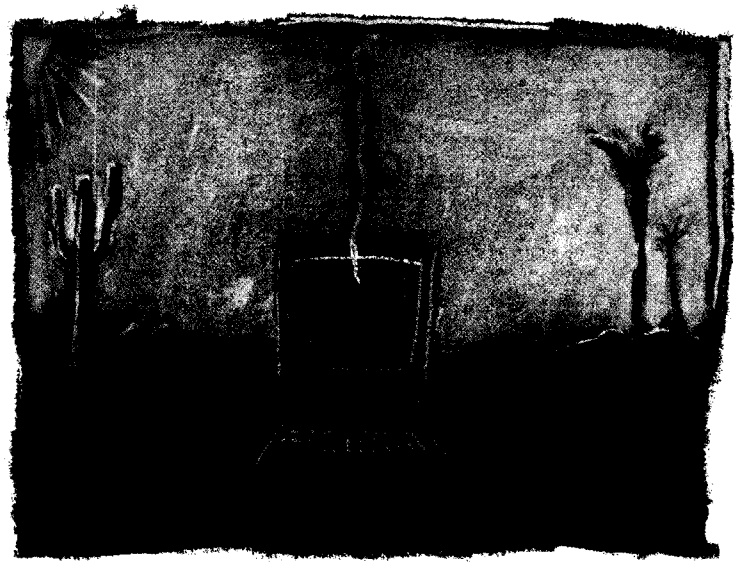
"He went in the front?"

"Wrote system code in the glory days, burned out on that, went independent, specialized in lockout software. He's into hardware now."

"Designing it?"

"Testing it, more like."

Offices and malls and taco stands swept by on El Camino. We arrived at the outskirts of Palo Alto, where start-ups roiled in every dingy industrial park, in the bedrooms of brick apartment buildings, at the whittled wooden tables of the old hamburger bars. Nothing could kill the entrepreneurial spirit, not even the nineties in California. Everybody had an angle, everybody had a scheme. It was endless, and now Boyce was one of them. He parked in front of a run-down hacienda with silver Quonset huts on either side. Night had nearly fallen. The air was acrid with the resins of burning electronics.



"You guys seen Mickey?" somebody asked when we got out of the car. A tall black man in rags had stepped out of the bushes.

"No, we haven't," Boyce said.

The guy took a step back into the light, and I saw that his clothes weren't rags. They were expensive designer things with all kinds of shapes and flaps cut into them.

"We just got here," Boyce said. "Where is he?"

"Didn't I clearly imply that I do not know where Mickey is?" the guy said, and went back into the shadows.

Then a white guy dressed in rags approached us from the opposite direction. "You guys seen Mickey?" he said.

"Would you mind stepping into the light?" I said, leading him underneath the lamp at the curb. This guy was really in rags, actual rags.

Boyce said, "What's with all you cats asking if we've seen Mickey?"

"All us cats?" the guy said. "Do I know you guys? Have I ever, like, *seen* you guys?"

"I just told the other dude. No, we have not seen Mickey."

"What other dude?"

I pointed at the bushes. "Over there somewhere. Wearing real fancy clothes. He's looking for Mickey too."

"He didn't actually say he was looking for Mickey," Boyce said. "He wanted to know if *we'd* seen Mickey. Just like you."

"That's true," I said. "Maybe you guys don't want to see Mickey at all."

"I see Mickey all the time," the guy said, and walked off into the darkness.

A small Filipino woman answered the door when we rang the bell. She seemed surprised to see us. "Isn't Mickey expecting us?" Boyce said.

"You're different," the woman said, and led us into her dwelling, where furniture and clothing and plastic media trash tumbled together indistinguishably in every room. We wound up in a wood-paneled den where two children played on shag carpeting in the blue glow of a sexual-hygiene program on the big TV. They looked a lot like their mother—for that was who she had to be. The kids were no more interested in us than in the blurry sex on the tube. I thought of my students, aliens whose human parents paid my bills, and I understood them better now. This was where they'd grown up. The house was from the sixties, when people put wet bars in their recreation rooms. On the dusty surface of a side table lay two handguns and a rifle—not toys, not dusty.

Mrs. Mickey walked us along a breezeway to one of the Quonset huts we'd seen from the street. At the entrance, midway along the metal pod's fuselage, she left us staring inside from the threshold. The shape and corrugation made it feel like an aircraft hangar—one in which had taken place, for some reason, the Battle of Silicon Valley. Mutilated corpses of computers from the past ten years lay in heaps around the cylindrical room, most horribly crushed or burned or melted. At a workbench in the midst of this wreckage, surrounded by banks of test equipment, a large bearded man in sleeveless fatigues was blowing a heat gun at a computer in a plain black box and laughing. Text and a picture were bending like taffy on the screen. A high-pitched squeal was emerging from the thing. An oscilloscope portrayed the computer's demise in ghostly green wiggles—lots of waves, lines with some waves, nothing but lines. Finally the screen

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crackled violently and then went blank. Blue-black smoke twirled from the computer's vents into an exhaust hood above the bench.

"He's an *abuse tester*," I whispered to Boyce. "You didn't tell me that. He kills computers for a living."

"Don't say 'kills,'" Boyce said. "*Stresses*."

"Piece of crap!" the man barked at the melting computer, and then he looked up and saw us standing there. He stood very still, staring at us, breathing deeply, with the heat gun still in his hand.

"Mickey?" Boyce said. "Are you Mickey? Hi, I'm Boyce. You were expecting us, right? Brubaker said we were coming?"

The man said nothing. Boyce looked worried, and worry was not a Boycean trait. It made me worried myself. But then, staring into this situation, I realized something about Mickey. He had just completed a kill and he wouldn't want to fight. He'd feel unthreatened and kingly. Unless overtly attacked, he'd be docile. He might even let smaller creatures pick at the edges of his prey. I pointed to the smoking prototype on his bench. "Did you drop it on the floor yet? I hear that's the first thing you're supposed to do. Drop it on the floor."

These words revived his inner animal. "You hear that 'cause that's what I do! *I* developed the protocol! *Me!*" He slapped himself on the chest. "Damn right I dropped it on the floor. I dropped it on the floor several times!" And then he laughed uproariously.

We were all right. He was verbalizing. Brubaker had told Boyce to expect a bearlike creature who communicated mainly by snuffling in his sinus passages, scratching himself, and emitting inexplicable giggles or guffaws.

Suddenly Mickey stopped laughing. "Brubaker told me one guy."

"That's me. Boyce. I just brought my friend along. Dante."

"*Dante?*" Mickey said, his face clouding over as he pronounced my name. He stared across the hut at old Fillmore West posters taped to the rippling metal walls. "The tomato family? Don't tell me this is the ketchup heir, the little tomato-to-paste trust-fund boy."

"Not *Del Monte*," Boyce said. "Dante. He's not from ketchup money."

"They're all related," Mickey said.

"The Del Montes maybe, but he's not a Del Monte."

Mickey cackled again, but he put his heat gun down, and though he didn't explicitly invite us in, he didn't not invite us either, so we picked our way through the technological waste. "The Revelation brothers," Mickey said.

"That's us," Boyce said.

A color TV in Mickey's lair was tuned to a news story about the thousands of people living at Moffett Air Field now that NASA's demise had left the old base free to become a homeless shelter. It was an election year, and a local politician came on to gas a few bites about the looting of taxpayer coffers.

"Bring out the old rockets," Mickey said. "Ship 'em to Mars!"

"What are you saying that for?" I said. "You have homeless friends yourself. We saw a homeless guy right here in front of your house."

Mickey peeped out a small window. "Where?"

"Right out front, man. He was asking for you too. 'You guys seen Mickey?' he said."

"That's no homeless guy!"

"He looked homeless," Boyce said.

"They just dress up like that."

Our deal seemed on the verge of going bad, so I said, "Hey, let's see this great computer."

"Hey, let's see this great computer," Mickey said.

"Well, if you don't mind."

He opened a door in an unpainted plasterboard wall and rolled the Revelation in on a cart. It wasn't burned or smashed or even dented. It maybe had a few scratches on it. He plugged it into the wall and flipped the switch. "Come on, sport," he said to me. "Let's see you do your stuff."

I'D never actually seen a 2000 in person before. Holographic software objects floated in the space between the computer and me, one of them announcing the machine's readiness for telephony in any form. I sat down and logged onto my account, bracing myself for power and speed. Even so I wasn't ready. The thing whomped me onto the Network like a jujitsu flip.

Hanlon's Razor:
Never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity.

You have new mail.

from: marybeth@media.sjcm.edu
"Your position here"

from: marybeth@media.sjcm.edu
Re(1) "Your position here"

from: marybeth@media.sjcm.edu
Re(2) "Your position here"

from: marybeth@media.sjcm.edu
Re(3) "Your position here"

from: marybeth@media.sjcm.edu
Re(4) "Your position here"

"You got mail, dude," Mickey said.

"I see that, Mickey."

"Who's marybeth?"

"My boss."

"How come she's writing you so much? You two into something? You got something going with the boss lady, Don?"

"Dante, Mickey. Don Tay." The thought of having something going with Mary Beth was so ludicrous I forgot what I

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was doing. I sat there like an idiot who didn't know what a computer was for.

"Don't know how to read mail?" Mickey said. "No problem on a Revelation. Just tell it what you want it to do."

"I don't want to read that mail right now. I'll read it some other time."

"But then how are you gonna know how blazing the Revelation is at your daily tasks? *Read the mail*," he barked at the box.

My first letter from Mary Beth joined us in the room as though we were reading the woman's mind. You couldn't describe the 2000 as "fast"—reality and the Revelation were basically indistinguishable. Everything just *was*, and in 3-D it all seemed almost edible besides. It was an amazing hardware experience. The message content was kind of a downer, though.

Date: Mon, 5 Apr 99 20:23 GMT
From: Mary Beth Hinckley <marybeth@media.sjcm.edu>
To: Dante Allegro Annunziata <dante@media.sjcm.edu>
Subject: Your position here

My dear Dante,

I assume some awareness on your part, however dim, of your contract's impending expiration, and of your ongoing evaluation for renewal in this department.

"What's this 'my dear' crap?" Mickey said.

"Scorn."

"Is she like this in person?" Boyce asked.

"No, she's more relaxed in the mail."

I—all of us, actually—have been reading your student evaluations. They make a most striking collection of documents. Indeed, we've never seen anything quite like it. The students are deliriously uncritical of you, Dante. It seems you can do no wrong. Are you, perhaps, being uncritical of them? There is no learning without criticism, mon cher. We're not here to have the children like us. We're here to teach, to mold, to impart.

More than being peculiar—nay, unprecedented—I'm afraid such student reaction to a professor raises serious questions. We must talk.

MBH

"You poor bastard," Boyce said. "Why didn't you share it with us? You didn't have to bear it alone."

"I've always told you I hated the place."

"That's true, you have."

"You put some major mojo on this chick," Mickey said. "She wants you, Don. She wants you bad."

"I don't think so, Mickey. For one thing, she's not a chick."

"Listen to me, dude. I know. *Next*," he said, and Mary Beth's next letter materialized in our midst, followed by the others in succession as Mickey said "*Next*" again and again, each letter more aggrieved than its predecessor, until finally her last message bodied forth from the screen, dated this afternoon.

Signor Annunziata:

Your silence is rude and mystifying, but I'll say no more about it here. Indeed, I'll say no more here at all, since this is the last mail you'll receive from me.

The formal hearing into your future will be held tomorrow, Tuesday, 13 April, at 9 AM, in the Provost's office. Feel free to join us, in the flesh or via video, though the proceedings will be conducted in absentia in any event. If you're feeling pressed for time, I expect a very brief session.

What happened, Dante? You seemed so promising at first. And with that lovely name. I hoped you'd join our little family. But not as the Prodigal Son.

MBH

"I like how they're doing it in absentia whether you're there or not," Boyce said.

"That captures it, doesn't it? But I'll hack on your Revelation till dawn, shave and shower, drag myself in there, plead for my job. It's all I have. I'll say I've been sick. I'll get some students to claim they don't like me."

"*Reply*," Mickey said, causing an empty text-window to appear, at which he recited an incantation that scrolled obediently up the screen as he spoke. Mickey was one of those holdovers from the early days of computers, people who type everything with Caps Lock on, and he must have trained the Revelation to do the same whenever it heard his voice.

STUCK UP BITCH

DON'T MESS WITH DONNY

HE COULD OF BEEN YOURS

BUT YOU WERE HOTTY

NOW SUFFER

"Hotty?" Boyce said.

"Yeah. Stuck up. Superior. *Hotty*."

"Oh. I see."

"That's great, Mickey," I said. "Thank you for coming to my defense. I'm touched, really I am. Now erase it, please."

"*Send*," he said, and his voodoo poem-curse to Mary Beth vanished from the screen, sucked away by the Network's solar wind.

Sometimes you don't know how close you are to flaming out till it happens, and this was the case with me. I sat down on a deformed plastic chair in this computer criminal's Quonset hut, and I began to cry. Not big out-and-out boohooing, but there's crying and there's not crying, and I was crying.

"What's he doing?" Mickey asked Boyce, backing away from me.

"He seems to be crying," Boyce said. "You okay, pal?"

"Well, make him stop," Mickey said.

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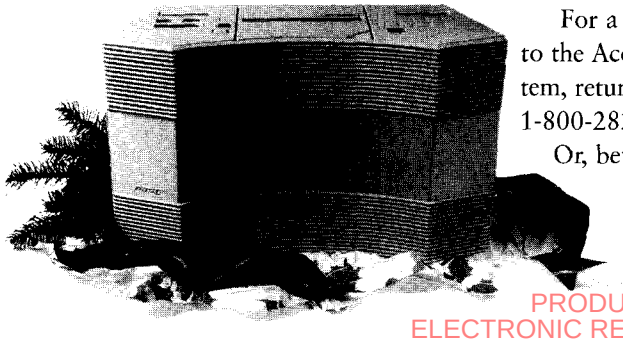

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"How am I gonna do that? You just got him fired from his job, man."

"She was messing with his mind. What does he wanna work there for anyway?"

"What does anybody want to work anywhere for, Mickey? Plus, things aren't going real well with his wife right now."

"What's the problem?"

"She left."

My weeping did become out-and-out boohooing at this point.

"He's a total loss, isn't he?" Mickey said, gazing down at me. "But he likes computers, right? Computers make him happy, it seems like."

"They always do seem to cheer him up," Boyce said.

Mickey went into his secret room and wheeled out another cart.

"What's that?" I said, sniffling. "That looks like another Revelation."

"I was gonna keep it for parts, but you seem so sad, dude. I don't like people feeling sad. It makes me feel weird. You want it?"

"How much?"

"Same as for him."

"Three thousand bucks? Where are you getting these?"

"Don't ask questions like that, Don. You want it, I take cash. You don't want it, you never saw it."

I had thirty-five hundred bucks in my savings account, and after that it was the graveyard shift at Drugs 'n' Such. "I'll take it." I turned to Boyce. "Get me to a bank machine."

Mickey put his huge, heavy arm on my shoulder. "Then you're feelin' better about things?"

"Yeah, I am, Mickey, thanks. Can I ask you a question, though? I'm just curious. What's in the other Quonset hut? The one on the other side of the house?"

"What's in it? My in-laws. You want one of them, too? We could work something out. Can't do better than a nice Filipino girl."

WE drove out onto the strip to look for an ATM. As the owner of a Revelation 2000, I could network with Boyce's machine and be part of his new venture, the construction of humanity's electronic mind. He offered me a job. I accepted. Then he revealed the identity of his major investor. I worked for Brubaker now.

Alongside a taco stand we found a riotously bright bank machine, its colored panels burning like gas in the California night. It sucked my card and started beeping at me.

Greetings, valued customer Dante Allegro Annunziata!

You have new Network mail! Read it now at your Mitsubishi ATM!

(Small service charge applies.)

(Reminder: your credit account is past due.)

I pushed the button and they dropped me right into my mail, no list of letters received, no fortune cookie, no nothing. They literally didn't give me the time of day. What did I expect? It was a bank. I had only one new letter anyway, from Snookie Lee.

Date: Tue, 13 Apr 99 02:03 GMT
From: Snookie Lee Ludlow <snooks@women.tex.edu>
To: Dante Allegro Annunziata <dante@media.sjcm.edu>
Subject: I did a wild thing

Dante,

I went kind of crazy. I did a wild thing.

They asked me their parrot questions, like I knew they would. No big surprise. But when I actually heard it happen, something inside me plopped. I refused to answer. I refused to say anything at all. I just sat there doing a Bartleby in my oral exams. It was so weird. I couldn't believe it. They couldn't believe it either. Surely you're going to say something, they said. I'd prefer not to, I said. This can't be happening, said my adviser. It's happening, I said. I can't believe you're not finishing this degree, she said. I'd prefer not to, I said.

There's a blank place after that. Somebody drove me home. I called Janet. She's picking me up at the airport in San Jose. I'm flying in at 10 PM. I sold my Le Car about a month ago. I guess I never told you that. Got five hundred bucks for it. We have to talk. This does not mean I'm staying. I'm on my way home to Alabama. Well, the long way. If I did stay, it would be because I had seen a Goddamn miracle walking around in your pants, I'll tell you that.

Oil noose well, you said. Oil well indeed. I slipped out. But how did you know that? You are one spooky cat.

Snooks

P.S. Lie low, keen soul, you said. Slow Lee due in. How did you *know* that? I've been having some bourbon. It reminds me of my lost home in the South. Been looking at your pictures too. You were always so cute, you Italian thing.

P.P.S. That doesn't necessarily mean anything.

"This is incredible," Boyce said. He'd been reading over my shoulder. "She wouldn't speak in her oral exams? She sat there in silence?"

"Yes, and what a woman she is!" I exclaimed, dropping into savings for my three thousand bucks, full of hope and dreams beyond reckoning, even by a Revelation 2000. A gigantic flashing jet was crossing the sky, coming in for a landing at San Jose. I checked my watch. It was tomorrow morning, Greenwich Mean Time. "Snookie's on that plane!" I cried, and with my life's liquid assets wadded up in my hand, I dashed for Boyce's Kodak Image and the golden future of knowledge and love.

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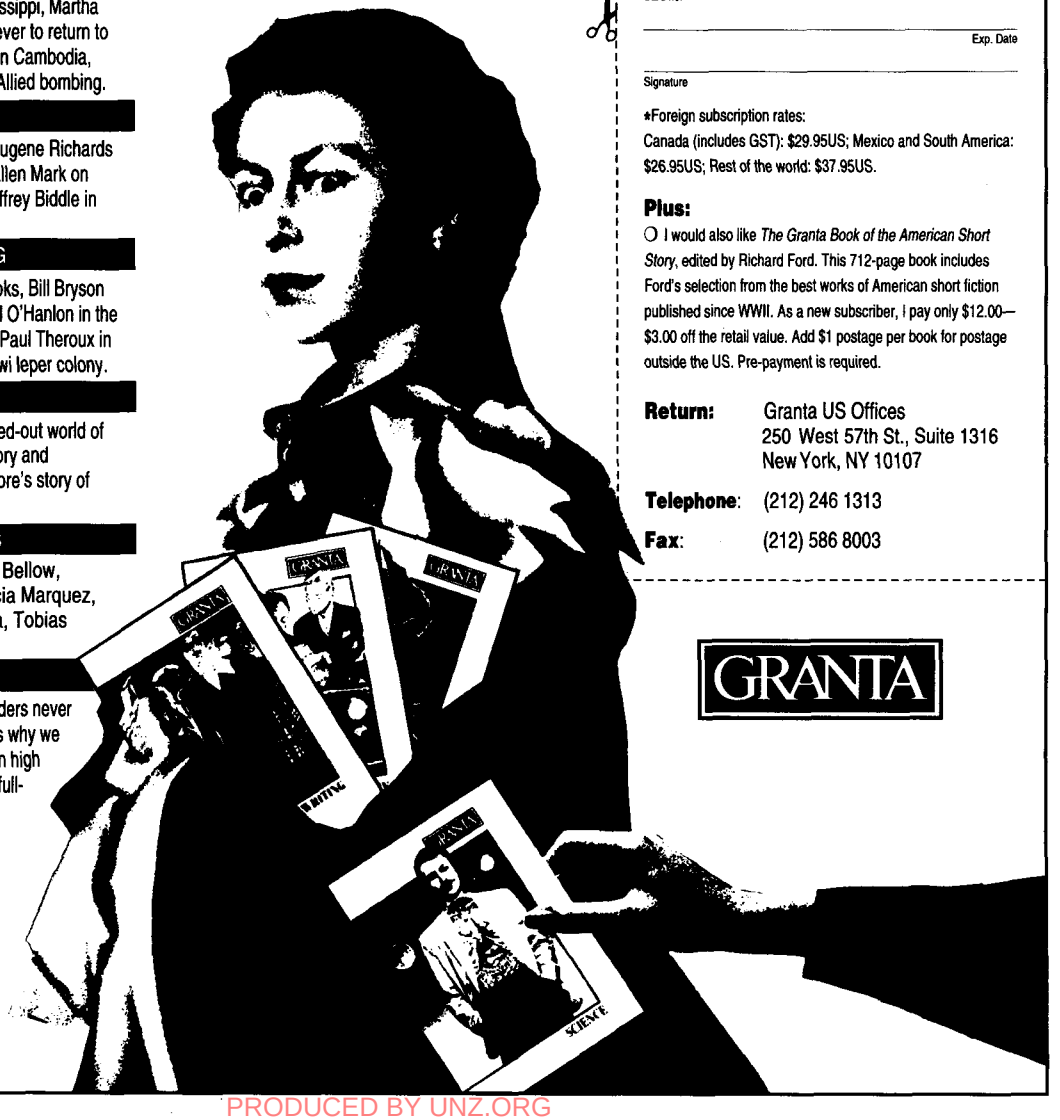

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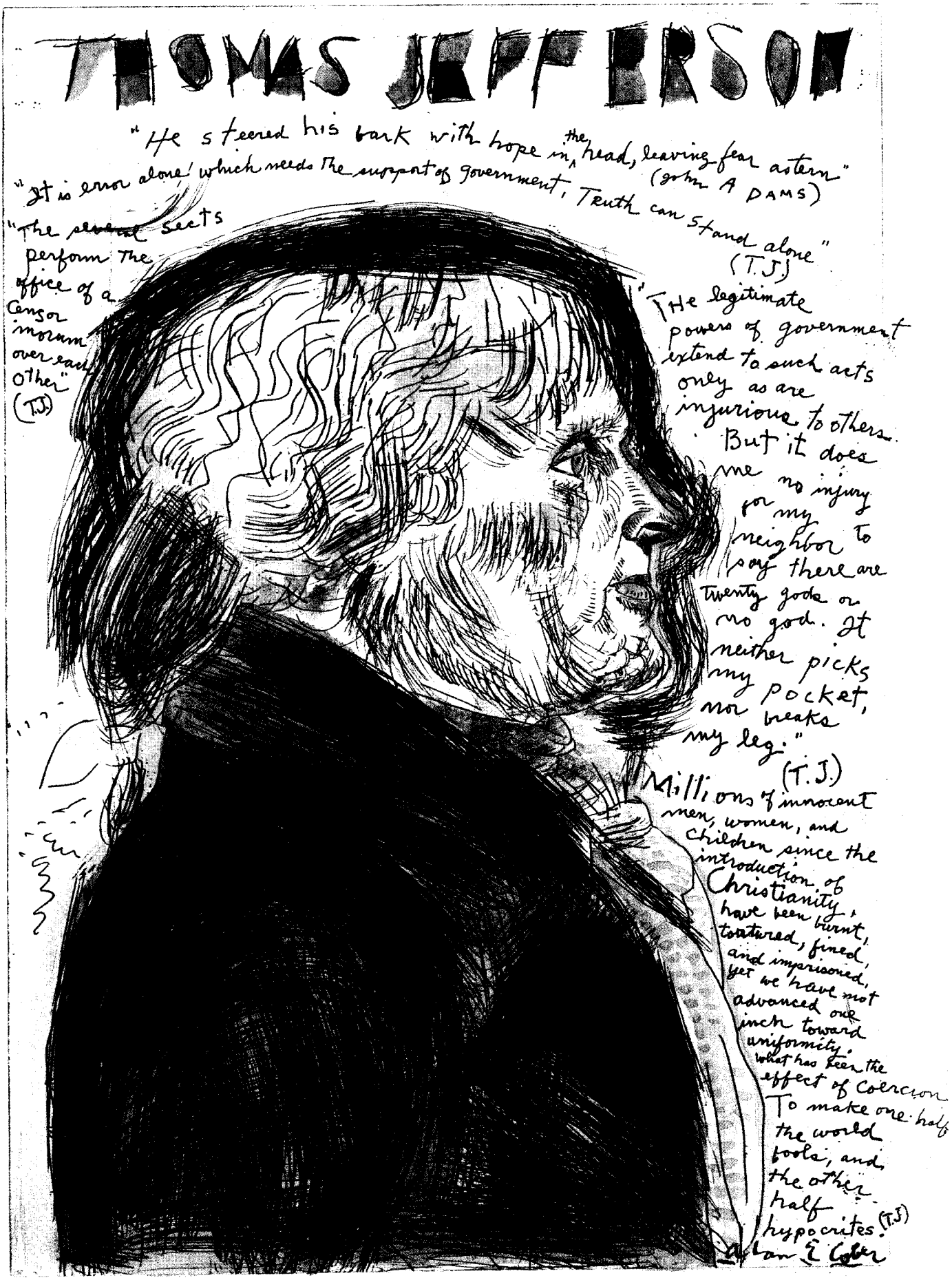

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JEFFERSON and Religious Freedom

by MERRILL D. PETERSON

In recent years the United States has witnessed growing acrimony over issues involving religion, politics, and government. In this essay a distinguished Jefferson scholar describes how Jefferson fought to build a wall of separation between the religious and civic spheres—and reminds us of the reasons why

THOMAS Jefferson was a methodical man all his life, and when he came to the end of that life, so crowded with accomplishments, it was perfectly in character for him to compose his own epitaph—indeed, to design his tombstone as well. He wished most to be remembered, he wrote, for three "testimonials" of his life:

> Author of the Declaration of American Independence
> of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom
> and Father of the University of Virginia

The inclusion of the statute in such a noble trinity has sometimes perplexed Jefferson's admirers. Of course he would wish to be remembered for the Declaration of Independence, which not only gave birth to the new American nation but provided it with a democratic creed and the world with a philosophy of human rights. And of course he would wish to be remembered for the University of Virginia: it was an enduring monument to his genius, not only in the physical architecture of the grounds and buildings but also in its educational spirit—so much so that it bore witness to the truth of Emerson's aphorism "An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man." But why should Jefferson include a mere statute, one of the laws of a single state, among the testimonials of his life? This essay is an answer to that question. And it maintains not only that the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom belongs in Jefferson's incisive epitaph but that it is, in fact, one of the main pillars of American democracy and a beacon of light and liberty to the world.

Viewed historically, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom is the supreme expression of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment in the life and work of Thomas Jefferson. He was a bookish man. In youth "a hard student," as he described himself, he was no less so in old age. He compiled three libraries during his lifetime. His great library of some 6,000 volumes became the foundation of the Library of Congress in 1815. And no sooner had he disposed of it than he commenced another, saying, "I cannot live without books." Growing up on the outskirts of civilization, in a kind of intellectual limbo, the young Jefferson learned from books—how to design a house, measure an eclipse, form a government. He extended his experience beyond the narrow range of Colonial life by means of the new learning of the age and gained a vantage point from which to perceive, through the eye of reason, things as they ought to be. His heroes were neither statesmen nor warriors but philosophers—in particular Bacon, Newton, and Locke, upon whom the edifice of the Enlightenment was raised. From his early exposure, at college, to the English and Scottish rationalists, Jefferson turned to the Continental votaries of the Enlightenment. Before the American Revolution he read Voltaire, Montesquieu, Holbach, Helvetius, Beccaria, and others. Later, in the 1780s, when he took up residence in Paris, the capital of the Enlightenment, he became something of a philosophe himself.

The dominant spirit of the Enlightenment was one of skepticism toward all received truths and of untrammeled free inquiry in the pursuit of knowledge. "Everything,"

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Diderot enjoined in the great *Encyclopédie*, "must be examined, everything must be shaken up, without exception and without circumspection." The mission of philosophy was no longer to reflect the world, or contemplate another, but to change it. "Knowledge is power," Bacon had said; and Jefferson was never more typically a child of the Enlightenment than in his youthful conviction that reason and inquiry may lead man away from whatever is false, twisted, and capricious in human affairs toward the truths inherent in the nature of things. Man had been too long alienated from nature. For centuries he had been dominated by dogmatic authority and superstition, which was embodied, above all, in the alliance of kings and priests, Church and State. Now those false idols were crumbling, and man might take control of his destiny by discovering the laws of nature and using them in the service of the species. Newton had demonstrated the order of the physical universe; Locke had pointed the way to a science of mind as well as of government; Linnaeus and Buffon had begun to impose system on the chaos of living things; and Adam Smith, coincidentally in 1776, broached the idea of an autonomous economic order governed by immutable laws of nature. All such laws were permanent, universal, harmonious, intelligible, beneficent, so man might feel at home in nature. The faith was aggressively secular, utilitarian, and progressive, its end being the increased freedom and happiness of humankind. In the great correspondence of their old age his glum friend John Adams liked to twit Jefferson on the exploded hopes of the Enlightenment. But the sunny Virginian would have none of it. He went to his grave believing that the future would be better than the past and that the advance of freedom was irreversible. As he told Adams, he steered his bark "with hope in the head, leaving fear astern."

The optimistic faith of the Enlightenment informed all of Jefferson's work. We see it in Jefferson the scientist, Jefferson the educator, Jefferson the statesman—all facets of the multifaceted genius. His public policies often reflected the rationalism of the Enlightenment: thus the decimal system of coinage with the dollar unit; thus the rectilinear land-survey system for the Transappalachian West, the effects of which are still visible to anyone who flies over the prairies and plains today and views the linear patchwork of the fields below; thus, too, though it was not adopted, Jefferson's methodically developed plan for a uniform system of weights and measures based on a natural and universal standard.

But it is *Notes on the State of Virginia*, the only book he managed to write in a crowded lifetime, that offers the best avenue into the enlightened mind of Thomas Jefferson. The book is by itself worthy of an essay. Meant as a contribution to the European Enlightenment, it was also a prolegomenon to the American Enlightenment, for here we find Jefferson, in the midst of the Revolutionary War, embarked upon the intellectual discovery of his native land, the greater Virginia of that day, which extended from Kentucky to the Great Lakes and westward to the Mississippi River. A work inspired by the spirit of the Enlightenment became a vehicle of American nationalism—of American self-definition. First published in Paris in 1785, *Notes on Virginia* appeared in an improved English edition in 1787; many American editions followed. Chapter 17, on religion, is especially interesting in relation to our subject. In it Jefferson gave his own philosophical account of the struggle for religious freedom in Virginia, a struggle he later remembered as "the severest" in which he had ever engaged.

JEFFERSON'S leadership in that struggle commenced in the fall of 1776, when he returned from Congress, in Philadelphia, and took his seat as the representative of Albemarle County in the General Assembly of the newly established Commonwealth of Virginia. Having set forth the fundamental principles of the new nation in the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson was eager to embody those principles in the laws of Virginia. He advocated a host of reforms of the old order: a more democratic suffrage and equal representation, an open and individualistic system of landholding shorn of feudal survivals, a more rational and humanitarian code of criminal justice, gradual emancipation of the slaves, a comprehensive system of public education, and, of course, disestablishment of the Anglican Church and the institution of a new order of religious life founded on the twin principles of absolute religious freedom and separation of Church and State. Several of the reforms were never enacted. Old Virginia rejected Jefferson's liberal vision of a new Virginia. After a decade-long campaign, however, his effort in behalf of religious freedom was crowned with success.

The Church of England had been established in the infancy of the colony. There was nothing unusual about this. Everywhere in the world Church and State were united, and dissenters from the one true faith, the established religion, although they might be tolerated, suffered numerous pains and penalties. Virginia had been one of six American colonies with an Anglican establishment. That establishment had never been strong, however, and as the number of dissenters increased during the eighteenth century, the Church steadily lost vigor, influence, and followers. In Virginia, as Jefferson remarked, perhaps as many as two thirds of the citizens were dissenters from the established Church. The Revolution rendered this conflict intolerable.

Jefferson had been disappointed that the Virginia constitution of 1776 left the establishment in place. Fortunately, the celebrated Declaration of Rights, adjoined to that constitution, asserted the true principle: "All men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience." As originally drafted by George Mason, the article guaranteed only "the fullest Toleration in the exercise of religion." But at the behest of James Madison, the young delegate from Orange County, the language of toleration was dropped in favor of the language of natural right: "All men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion." The change amount-

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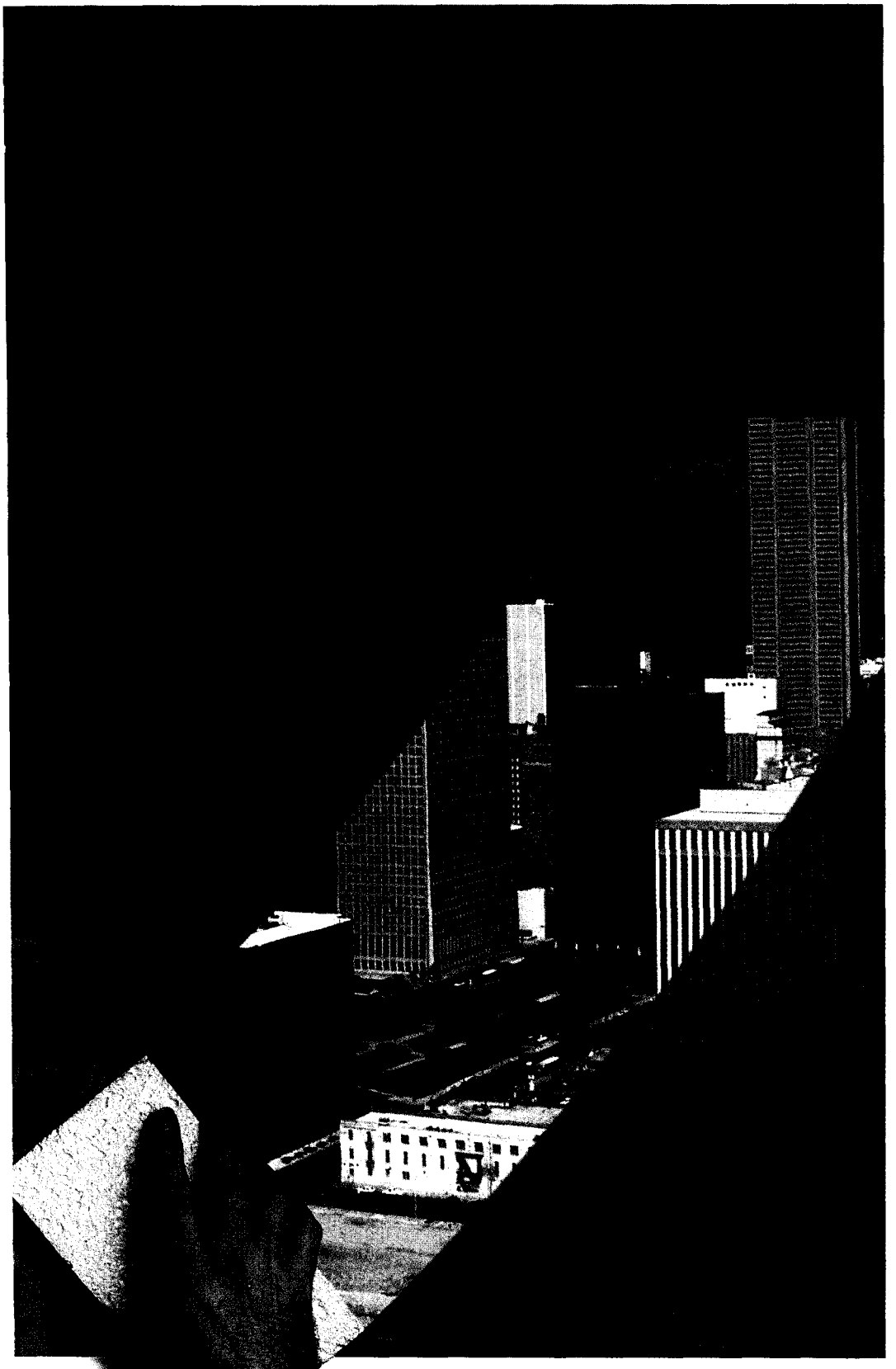

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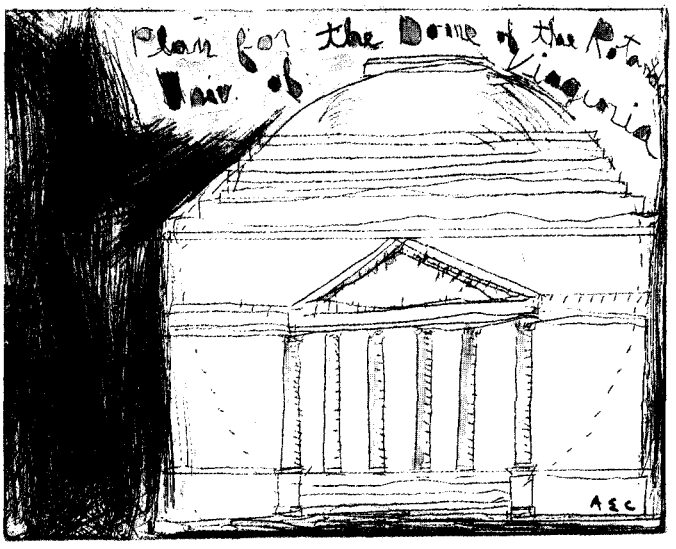
ed to only a few words, yet it was momentous. The English Act of Toleration, it was commonly thought, had extended to Virginia. Under it dissenting Protestants—not Roman Catholics or Jews, please note—were allowed to hold religious services provided that their ministers and places of worship were registered with the government. The idea of toleration assumed an official religion along with the right of the state to grant favor to dissenters or withhold it. Toleration, therefore, fell well short of equality. As Thomas Paine said, "Toleration is not the *opposite* of intoleration, but is the *counterfeit* of it. Both are despotisms. The one assumes to itself the right of withholding liberty of conscience, and the other of granting it." On the principle of toleration nothing needed to be changed in Virginia law and practice in 1776. Toleration was the status quo. But if the principle of individual freedom and right became the basis of legislation, there must be a sweeping change in the civil and religious life of the commonwealth.

Jefferson then posed the question: "Has the state a right to adopt an opinion in matters of religion?" Answering with a resounding negative, he pursued the argument well beyond the original question of a single state Church.



And so it happened. When the first General Assembly met, in October of 1776, it was flooded with petitions for the disestablishment of the Church and the removal of disabilities from dissenters. One petition, from Prince Edward County, looked to the end of "a long night of ecclesiastical bondage" and to a new day in which Virginia would be "an asylum for free inquiry, knowledge, and the virtuous of every denomination." Another prayed "that every denomination . . . be put on an equal footing." The Hanover Presbytery observed that "every argument for civil liberty gains additional strength when applied to liberty in the concerns of religion," thereby recognizing the importance of this liberty to every other liberty. In this campaign the battalions were provided by the dissenting sects: Methodists, Presbyterians, and, above all, Baptists. Their motives were clearly religious; they sought, as had Roger Williams and William Penn before them, the liberty of their own faith. They were marshaled and led, however, by liberals and rationalists like Jefferson and Madison, who, while friendly to religion, were not sectarians, and aimed to secure the republic and its citizens from the "spiritual tyranny" of any and every religion. The two groups shared a goal, though for different reasons. And so, by the unique logic of American history, the seekers after salvation and the seekers after freedom and enlightenment were allies in the Virginia struggle.

Jefferson outlined his whole philosophy of the subject in a speech delivered to the House of Delegates in November. (There is no record of the speech; what follows is based on Jefferson's notes.) He began with a history lesson on the evils of religious establishments. Much of this concerned the Old World. But even in Virginia, he noted, the laws punished heresy by death, and denial of the Trinity by three years' imprisonment; the law of blasphemy punished religious belief as well as speech; freethinkers might have their children taken from them under Virginia law; church attendance was compulsory; and so on. To be sure, the laws were for the most part dead letters. But that did not remove the stigma of the laws, and it offered no security against returning oppression and injustice. The ongoing persecution of Baptist ministers, in particular, was notorious. These "disturbers of the peace" had been hounded, silenced, and imprisoned. All dissenters were taxed to support the Anglican Church. This, too, was persecution. What kind of attachment might these people feel toward a government that discriminated against them on behalf of a Church and a clergy associated with the British enemy? Political realism as well as human right demanded disestablishment.

Jefferson then posed the fundamental question: "Has the state a right to adopt an opinion in matters of religion?" Answering with a resounding negative, he pursued the argument well beyond the original question of a single state Church. According to the Lockean, or contractual, theory of

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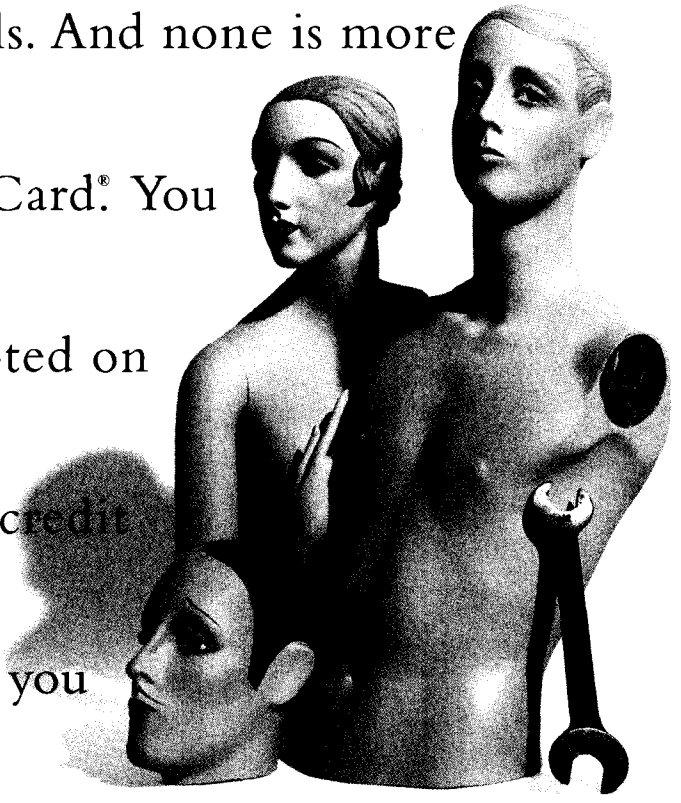

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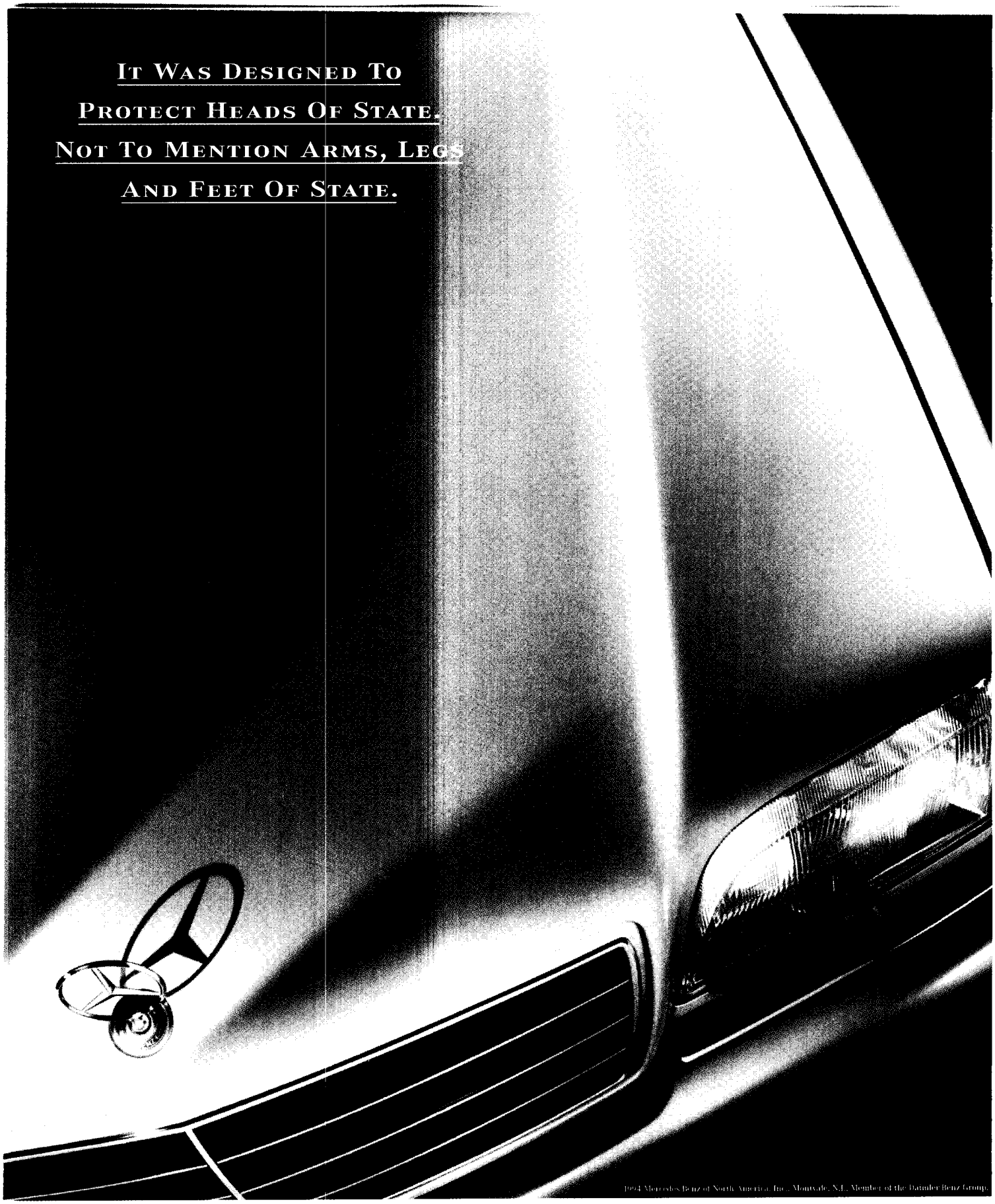

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civil government, men enter into government to secure those rights they cannot secure themselves. But religious conscience, being wholly inward and private, is not one of these. It does not depend upon civil authority. Indeed, it cannot abide coercion, for religion in its nature depends upon the inward persuasions of the mind. Men and women are answerable for their religious beliefs solely to God. Jefferson later gave memorable expression to the doctrine in *Notes on Virginia*: "The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no god. It neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg."

Regardless of the question of right, Jefferson went on, the State's intervention in religious matters was harmful to religion itself. Assailing the folly of state-supported and -mandated religions, Jefferson sounded like a Virginia Voltaire: "Millions of innocent men, women, and children since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned, yet we have not advanced one inch towards uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools, and the other half hypocrites." The progress of truth in religion, as in science, depended upon the progress of free inquiry and private judgment over the coercion and error of authority, both civil and ecclesiastical. "It is error alone which needs the support of government," Jefferson declared. "Truth can stand by itself." Religious differences—the multiplicity of sects and creeds in America—are beneficial to society. "The several sects perform the office of a Censor morum over each other." Religious differences are equally beneficial to religion, for they set up a virtuous competition among the sects and require them to stand on their own mettle rather than depending on external support. In the years to come Jefferson often reaffirmed his belief in the salubrity of America's religious pluralism. Writing to a rabbi who had sent him a discourse on the consecration of the synagogue in Savannah in 1821, he spoke of the two great principles proved by the American experience. First, he said, man can be trusted with the government of himself; and second, freedom is the most effectual anodyne against religious dissension and conflict, "the maxim of civil government being reversed in that of religion, where its true form is 'divided we stand, united we fall.'"

THE first contest, in 1776, ended in several small victories. The General Assembly repealed some of the most oppressive English statutes and exempted dissenters from taxes to support the Anglican Church. But the Church was not disestablished, and parish levies on its members to support it were not abolished, only suspended. At the same time, the assembly reserved decision on a new issue, a new proposal, offered as a kind of via media between the old establishment and the radical reform wanted by Jefferson. This called for a general tax on all citizens for the support of all Christian ministers. Everyone would have the assurance that his shilling went into the pocket of his minister, be he Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, or even Catholic. Churchmen, foreseeing the doom of the old order, hoped to salvage something by creating the broad foundation of a plural establishment. Always before in history the establishment of religion had meant official sanction and support of a single state Church. But now, in the course of religious controversy in Virginia, the concept took on new meaning: the civil support of Christianity without preference as to sect.

It was in part to close off this development that Jefferson drafted his Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, in 1777. Two years later, after repeal of the levies on Anglicans, Jefferson introduced his bill in the assembly. Two plans were now before it. One, Jefferson's, was a root-and-branch rejection of any civil authority in matters of religion and an affirmation of complete freedom of belief and worship. The other, the "general assessment" plan, which authorized taxation in support of the Christian religion regardless of sect, did so on traditional grounds—for instance, the recognized power of the state to diffuse knowledge, restrain vice, and further the peace and good order of society. A similar plan for a plural establishment, although confined to Protestant Christianity, had been adopted in South Carolina the previous year. In Virginia the two plans came to be identified with the two giants of the state's politics: Patrick Henry, the first governor, now retiring, and Jefferson, the newly elected governor. The issue was clearly drawn. But neither plan could command a majority of

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CHEAP SEATS, THE CINCINNATI GARDENS, PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL, 1959

The less we paid, the more we climbed. Tendrils
of smoke lazed just as high and hung there, blue,
particulate, the opposite of dew.
We saw the whole court from up there. Few girls
had come, few wives, numerous boys in molt
like me. Our heroes leapt and surged and looped
and two nights out of three, like us, they'd lose.
But "like us" is wrong: we had no result
three nights out of three: so we had heroes.
And "we" is wrong, for I knew none by name
among that hazy company unless
I brought her with me. This was loneliness
with noise, unlike the kind I had at home
with no clock running down, and mirrors.

—WILLIAM MATTHEWS

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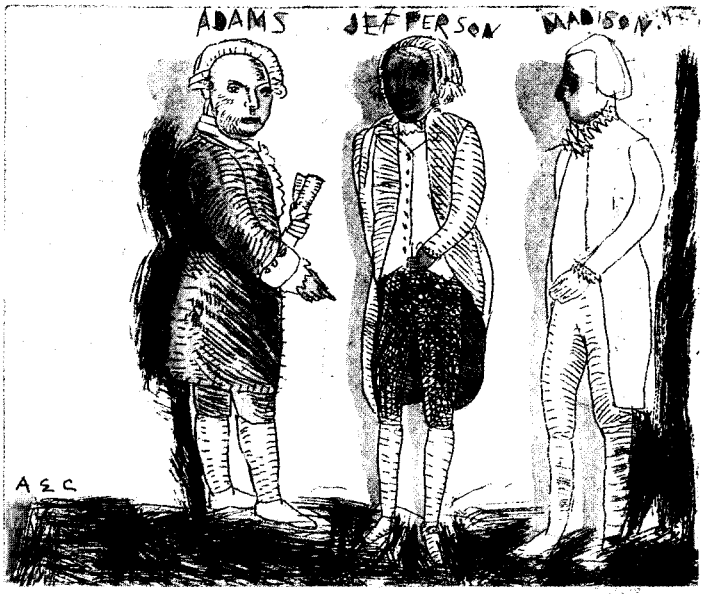
the General Assembly in 1779 or for several years to come.

The conclusion of the controversy awaited the end of the Revolutionary War. In 1784 Congress sent Jefferson on a mission to France, and James Madison, his young friend, having just retired from Congress, assumed the leadership of the reform party in the House of Delegates. Petitions again poured into the assembly. The assessment plan now had the title "A Bill for Establishing a Provision for Teachers of the Christian Religion," and it had the backing of churchmen—those friends of the longtime establishment now reorganized as the Protestant Episcopal Church—as well as of the popular hero Henry. He was such a powerful figure in the house that Madison feared the assessment bill would pass. But Henry was a man of inordinate vanity, which made him vulnerable. He wished to be governor again. Seizing on this opening, Madison obligingly kicked him upstairs to the governorship. In that office, under the constitution of that day, he had virtually no influence with the legislature. This was the good news. But there was bad news. The famed Hanover Presbytery, which had opposed a general tax, would cease to do so as long as the revenue was distributed fairly to all denominations. The Presbyterian clergy, Madison remarked acidly, were "as ready to set up an establishment which is to take them in as they were to pull down that which shut them out." But for their suspicion that the bill's primary purpose was to prop up the Episcopalians, the Methodists, too, though never the Baptists, would have supported it. The bill made steady progress in the house. Madison waged a desperate delaying action. Finally, as the session drew to a close, he got the delegates to agree to postpone the vote on the bill until November of 1785.

> Alexis de Tocqueville, who traveled in the United States at that time, was astounded by the coexistence of "the spirit of liberty" and "the spirit of religion." In Europe, where joined, they were antagonists; in America both flourished.



In the spring of that year Madison wrote his *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments*. Handwritten and printed copies, without attribution of authorship, circulated throughout central Virginia. They were commonly attached to sheets of paper asking for signatures. The *Memorial* is a brilliant exposition of the philosophy crystallized in Jefferson's statute: it proceeds from the same Enlightenment directives of reason and right, and reaches the same conclusions. Madison maintained that tax support subverted rather than sustained true religion—indeed, that it was "an unhallowed perversion of the means of salvation." And Madison warned those who made light of the assessment plan, thinking it a harmless halfway point between the liberal skeptics and the sectarian religionists, of the dangers of compromising such a fundamental principle as religious freedom. "Who does not see," he asked, "that the same authority which can establish Christianity, in exclusion of all other religions, may establish with the same ease any particular sect of Christians, in exclusion of all other sects?" The argument was persuasive. When the General Assembly met in the fall, it received more than a hundred petitions on religion. Only eleven supported the general-assessment plan; many others, with some 11,000 signatures, were copies of the *Memorial and Remonstrance*. Moreover, the Presbyterians, after further reflection, returned to the freedom coalition. Support for a plural establishment had virtually disappeared, and Madison seized the occasion to reintroduce Jefferson's Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom. It passed with but one minor change. A senate amendment would have gutted the bill by striking the preamble, but the house stood firm, and the bill became law on January 16, 1786.

The statute is in three parts: the preamble, the enacting clause, and a final admonitory paragraph. The preamble,

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which is three fourths of the statute, is an eloquent manifesto—about 600 words—on the sanctity of the human mind. Its subject is not only religious liberty but also intellectual liberty of the widest latitude. Into it Jefferson poured all his rage against the cant and falsehood, the corruption and tyranny, that marked the history of the alliance between Church and State. He declared that religion and government are separate spheres, "that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions," that to allow government to intervene is wrong and destructive of both liberty and religion, that it is time for the government to interfere only when there are overt acts against peace and good order, and, finally, that "truth is great and will prevail if left to herself." The enacting clause says that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any church and that all shall be free to hold and exercise their religious beliefs without affecting their civil capacities. The last paragraph is curious. In the spirit of the Enlightenment, Jefferson repeatedly declared himself a rebel against the past. He believed that each generation should be allowed to make laws to suit itself and should be free of the public debts incurred by its predecessors. Yet he considered the principles of this statute so fundamental that he put future generations, and future lawmakers, on notice: "If any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right."

Jefferson was United States Minister to France when the statute was enacted. He promptly saw to its publication. Before the year ran out, he reported to Madison on the praise accorded it. "I do not mean by the governments, but by the individuals which compose them," he wrote from Paris. "It has been translated into French and Italian, has been sent to most of the courts of Europe. . . . It is inserted in the new Encyclopedie. . . . It is comfortable," he concluded on a note of pride,

> to see the standard of reason at length erected, after so many ages during which the human mind has been held in vassalage by kings, priests and nobles; and it is honorable for us to have produced the first legislature who has had the courage to declare that the reason of man may be trusted with the formation of his own opinions.

THE statute laid the foundation for the unique American tradition of Church-State relations. A few words should be said about some of the most common misconceptions about Jefferson and the statute. To address perhaps the most common fallacy: it is often maintained that nothing in the statute was meant to exclude governmental intrusion in matters of religion as long as the intrusion is on a neutral or nonpreferential basis. But that approach is precisely what was rejected in Virginia. And in the statute, after saying it is "sinful and tyrannical" to compel a person to support opinions he does not share, Jefferson went on to declare that even "forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion" is wrong. Present-day neoconservatives and spokesmen for the religious right argue, for essentially political reasons, that a common religion is the necessary glue of the nation, that we began as a Christian people, and that however pluralist we may have become, the survival of the republic rests upon the foundation of Christian or perhaps Judeo-Christian belief. God forbid, they say, that the government should regulate our economic behavior, but it ought to regulate moral and religious belief. Again, the whole thrust of Jefferson's philosophy was to reject that position, to reject any idea that a shared community of religious beliefs or of moral values, other than the value of freedom itself, was necessary to society. He sought to raise the republic on the inalienable rights of man, allowing every citizen sovereignty over his own mind and conscience.

Jefferson has never been without critics with regard to his own religion as well as his politics. There are some (more in the past than today) who look upon him as an atheist or infidel, and therefore an aberration in the American scheme of things; they charge that he had a hidden agenda hostile to Christianity. And so it is said that the statute, instead of aiming at freedom of religion, actually sought to impose upon the people a new, infidel religion of the Enlightenment, a kind of secular humanism destructive of traditional moral and religious values. The University of Virginia, later founded on a purely secular basis, was widely denounced by clerics as a deistic enterprise of enormous proportions. Jefferson's own religion was a version of deism, but he was not therefore hostile to ordinary religious belief and profession. As a modern philosopher, Herbert Schneider, has said, "The power and eloquence of Jefferson's writing on religious freedom is due largely to his evident religious devotion." Unlike the anticlericalism of the Old World, Jefferson's hatred of priesthoods and establishments did not involve him in hatred of religion. He wished for himself, and for his countrymen, not freedom from religion but freedom to pursue religious truth wherever reason and conscience led, and the more earnest and upright the pursuit, the more respect it won from him. Jefferson's own pursuit had led him in his youth to a form of natural religion, and in his later years he adopted the moral teachings of Jesus as his creed while continuing to reject biblical revelation—without which, in the eyes of most believers, he could not be considered a real Christian. No matter. He said he was a sect of one. At all times he tried to keep his religious convictions to himself, as he believed everyone was entitled to do; regrettably, his political foes declined to cooperate and, especially in the presidential election of 1800, made a great issue of his supposed infidelity.

The burden of Jefferson's work was on the side of tearing down, and so it was charged that he laid the ax to the pillars of the established church but raised nothing in its place. In fact the substitute was already at hand in what was called the "voluntary system," entirely in keeping with the religious pluralism of the country. The system had proved itself

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End of the Migration Era—Time for a Moratorium

If the grass is always greener on the other side, then a quick glance at our daily papers tells us that, for an awful lot of people worldwide, the grass they covet grows in the United States. Never before in the history of this nation have so many people wanted to move here. Never before have we faced so many difficult choices in deciding who, out of millions of basically nice folks, we will allow to enter. A storm is brewing. The differential pressure inside and outside our borders has left the nation vulnerable to unregulated surges of people seeking our shores.

This acute pressure can only grow in intensity. Any loophole in our immigration processes, any opportunity for exploitation or illegal border crossing, will produce uncontrolled waves of immigrants. This may seem hard to believe, but recently, the United Nations named 17 countries as "potential Somalias," or nations that could face collapse, including Mexico, Egypt, Nigeria and Algeria. In each nation or region, we see similar phenomena—a breakdown of civil order and a large, growing, poorly-educated and dissatisfied population in danger of starvation. Civil war, separatist movements, generalized civil and social breakdown—each produce large refugee flows.

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FAIR believes the answer to each of these questions is no. If we don't need immigration, why have it? The answer seem to be perceived tradition and habit. Is this how we want to form national policies?

Polls show most Americans want immigration reduced, and FAIR thinks the nation could use a moratorium or "time-out" on immigration for a while.

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by Dan Stein, Executive Director

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in Pennsylvania. There churches of many denominations flourished with only the voluntary support of their members, and unparalleled harmony prevailed amid the widest diversity. "They have made the happy discovery," Jefferson observed, "that the way to silence religious disputes is to take no notice of them." Another part of the experiment, at least for Jefferson, was broad-based public education. His Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, drafted at the same time as the Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, provided for a comprehensive system of public education, from primary schools through a state university. The parish church would be replaced by the local schoolhouse as the main moral and educational force in the community. And the citizens, instead of paying taxes to support churches, would be taxed to support public schools. Unfortunately, this constructive part of Jefferson's reform program met with defeat in Virginia.

The Statute for Religious Freedom became a model for other American states old and new; moreover, its principles entered into the United States Constitution by way of the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights, for which we are largely indebted to Jefferson's great collaborator, James Madison: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." As President of the United States, Jefferson in 1802 put a gloss on the clause which was destined to have far-reaching influence. Writing to a committee of Baptists in Connecticut, he said,

> Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," *thus building a wall of separation between Church and State* [emphasis added].

At that time, and until 1940, the First Amendment, along with all the guarantees of the Bill of Rights, was held to be a restraint only on the national government. And so it rarely came into play, since most matters touching religion, or speech and press, belonged to the sphere of the state governments. But beginning in 1940 the Supreme Court made the guarantees of the First Amendment, and ultimately of the Bill of Rights as a whole, applicable to the states. The justices on the bench and the advocates at the bar were much influenced in their understanding of the "free exercise" clause by their understanding of the Virginia statute and the circumstances that had produced it. As one of them, Justice Wiley Rutledge, said, "The great instruments of the Virginia struggle . . . became the warp and woof of our constitutional tradition." The justices also picked up Jefferson's metaphor of "a wall of separation." Plain and simple though it might seem, the metaphor was not easily applied to the many cases that now came before the Supreme Court. Justice Robert H. Jackson once remarked that the "wall of separation" described by the Court was beginning to look like one of Jefferson's serpentine garden walls at the University of Virginia.

The progress of Jefferson's twin principles, of religious freedom and separation of Church and State, in Virginia's fellow states is another story. Certain milestones may quickly be noted. South Carolina abandoned its experiment with a plural establishment in 1790. Connecticut terminated tax support for parish churches with its constitution in 1818. And Massachusetts, the original Puritan commonwealth, the home of orthodox Congregationalism, expunged the last vestige of state-supported religion from the United States in 1833.

Alexis de Tocqueville, who traveled in the United States at that time, was astounded by the coexistence of what he called "the spirit of liberty" and "the spirit of religion" in this country. In Europe, where joined, they were antagonists; in America both flourished although they were completely separate. Amazing! Twenty years later Philip Schaff, a German theologian, studied the matter and concluded as follows: "The vitality of religion [in America] is owing to its self-reliance, its freedom, and its abstention from politics. The voluntary system develops individual activity and liberality in the support of religion, while the state-church system has the opposite effect." Thus the universal opinion at the time of the American Revolution—that, in Jefferson's words, "civil government could not stand without the prop of a religious establishment, and that the Christian religion would perish if not supported"—had been repudiated and replaced by a great new truth.

Appropriately, words from the Virginia statute are among those that grace the walls of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, and its great dome is encircled by his personal oath: "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." Nowhere in the world today is there more genuine freedom of conscience, and more respect for the separateness of Church and State, than in the United States. It is a precious legacy. Nevertheless there are powerful voices in the land which would rewrite history and undermine these revolutionary principles. More-subtle dangers lurk in adjudications by the courts. One particular Supreme Court ruling in 1990, the so-called Peyote Case, which upheld civil sanctions against the use of peyote in the worship rituals of Native Americans, led Congress three years later to pass the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, mandating a return to high standards of state nonintervention. President Bill Clinton, on signing the act into law, remarked on the "majestic quality" of this reaffirmation of a two-centuries-old faith in the principles of religious freedom and separation of Church and State. Thomas Jefferson's contribution to this long tradition was fundamental, as he must have believed it would be when he inscribed "Author . . .of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom" in his epitaph.

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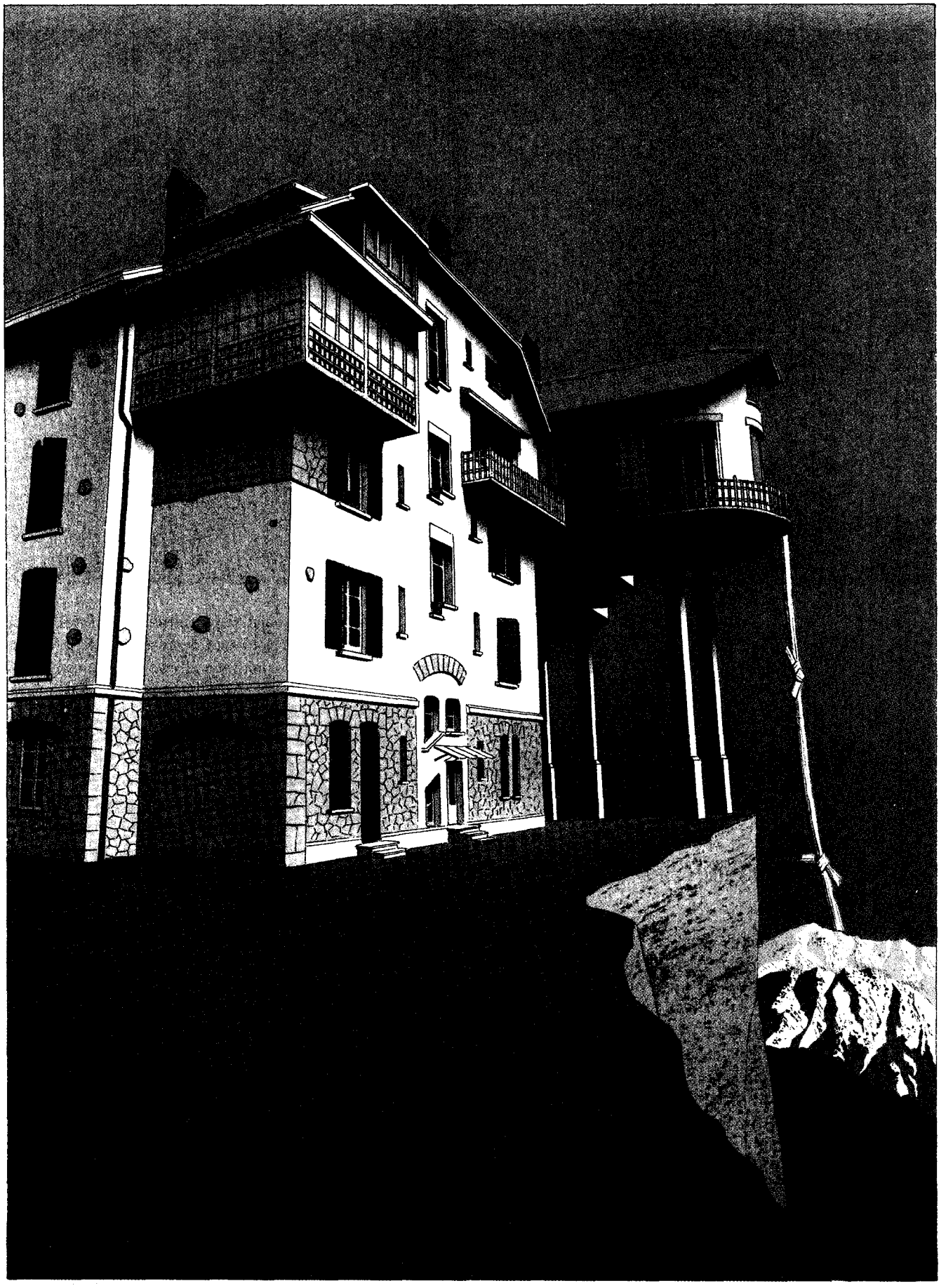

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The New-Old Bourbons

Southern distillers are reviving and refining spirituous crafts

by Corby Kummer

THE talk among whiskey fanciers—the ones who a few years ago were bragging about their latest hard-to-find single-malt Scotch—has turned to "small-batch bourbons." Bourbon was the drink of choice in my parents' house and the first liquor I learned to like. I recently went south to find out how small-batch bourbons are made and what makes them so new. I came back convinced that bourbon and its cousins are America's contribution to world distillery, with as strong a claim to greatness as anything from Scotland, Ireland, or Canada.

I say "and its cousins" because it turns out that what my parents thought of as bourbon isn't really. I made the innocent but in southern parts grave error of beginning my bourbon trip in Tennessee, home of Jack Daniel, which widely publicizes its distillery tours. At a grand wine auction in Nashville which is held every year to benefit the American Cancer Society, I said casually to my welcoming hosts that I was driving down to see how Jack Daniel made bourbon. "You mean Tennessee sour-mash whiskey," one of them said firmly, and she politely took me to task for not knowing that bourbon is named for a county in Kentucky. Even though no commercial distilleries remain in Bourbon County and a U.S. law defining bourbon allows it to be made anywhere in the country, bourbon is thought of as a Kentucky product.

When I took the really worthwhile, only minimally hokey Jack Daniel tour and then traveled to Kentucky, I learned that the difference between the two kinds of whiskey does transcend geography, and helps explain why as an adolescent I particularly enjoyed sneaking sips of Jack Daniel's. Before being aged in barrels, Tennessee sour-mash whiskey "leaches," or drips slowly, through a ten-foot vat of charcoal made from sugar maple. The wood, according to some, sweetens the whiskey, which is already sweeter than most of the world's whiskeys, owing to the grain—corn—that makes up most of its base. Bourbon is sour-mash whiskey without the sugar-maple leaching.

The most important differences, though, are not between states but between individual distilleries. As good as Tennessee sour-mash whiskey can be, bourbon is where the action is. Small-batch bourbons aren't new at all in the way they're made. What is new is a revival of craftsmanship and skill in a process that over the years

Illustration by Tom Sully

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became commercialized. K. Dun Gifford, one of the founders of Oldways, a group dedicated to preserving traditional methods of making food and wine, told me recently that he thinks of the new, proudly old-fashioned bourbons as "America's grappas," meaning handcrafted distillates worthy of great ceremony. He remarked that any of them makes a wonderful gift for a foreign host. I would add that they make fine gifts for domestic hosts, too, not to mention for oneself.

WHAT clinched my interest in bourbon was the sour mash, which is sourdough that becomes liquor instead of bread. Any baker will recognize the process of letting grains ferment into sugars by the action of yeast, which then converts the sugars to carbon dioxide and alcohol. Like the new crop of bread makers who bake sourdough bread incorporating strains of yeast captured from the air rather than only commercial yeast, bourbon distillers use "natural" yeast and keep old strains alive for decades. Whiskey makers compete, in fact, in their claims about yeasts that go back to before Prohibition. Of the nine bourbon-making companies that survive around Louisville, only a very few, including Old Forester, were legally permitted to continue selling bourbon during Prohibition—for medicinal purposes. But people at other distilleries will tell you of lovingly maintained if smelly jugs of yeast nourished throughout the dark years of the Volstead Act.

For some reason I had always thought that the base of a distilled liquor didn't make much difference, since it all winds up tasting like alcohol anyway. But in tasting bourbons made from different recipes I began to understand how much of a change in final flavor grains can make. By law bourbon must be distilled from at least 51 percent corn; rye whiskey, for its part, must be distilled from at least 51 percent rye. The predominance of corn in bourbon is a historical accident. Settlers looking to simulate the rye- and barley-based whiskeys of their home countries naturally turned to the staple grain growing all around them. Whiskey based entirely on corn, however, was too sweet for most tastes, and so distillers experimented with different combinations of corn and "smalls"—wheat, rye, barley.

The different flavors are roughly analogous to the flavors of the grains in bread

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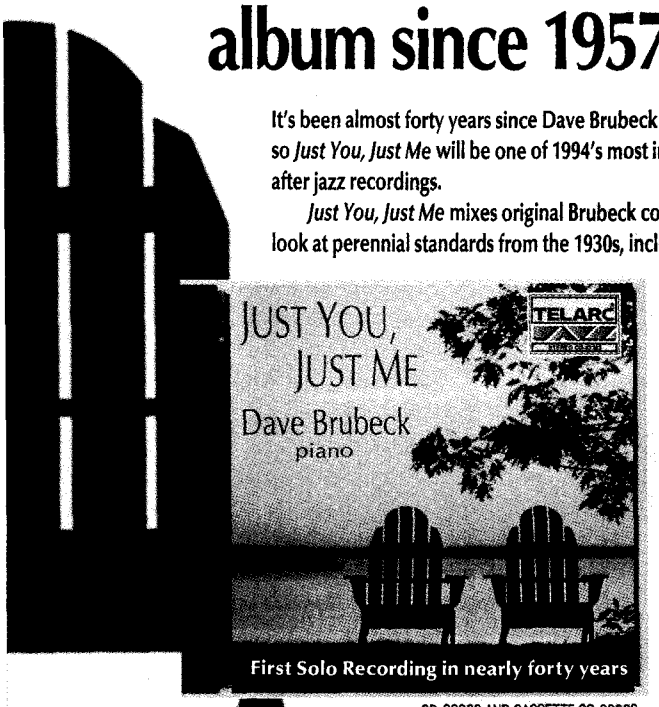

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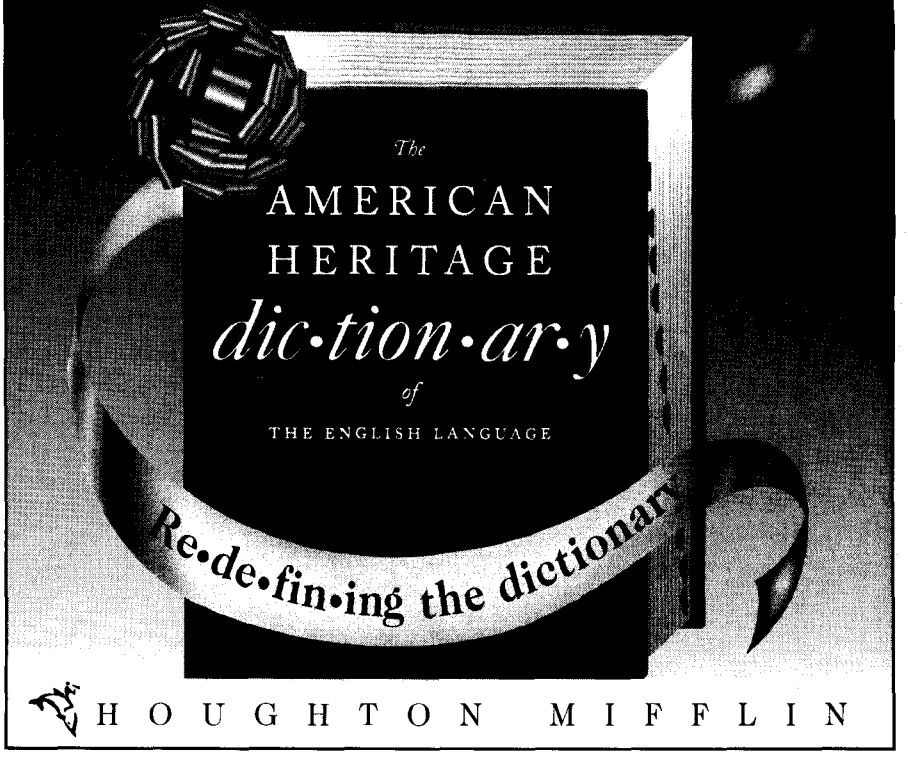

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and hot cereal. Corn gives a full but bland sweetness: think of unseasoned polenta or grits. Malted barley gives a round sweetness, as it does to beer—it's the hops, a kind of dried flower, that give beer its bitter edge, and some bourbon makers in fact put hops in their equivalent of a sourdough starter. Wheat gives an overall refinement reminiscent of white bread, something that goes unappreciated these days. The flavor of wheat flour is so much taken for granted that without the tang of a sourdough starter or the butter and sugar of a cake it seems unnoticeable. But when you taste a bourbon that relies heavily on wheat—like Maker's Mark—you understand how distinctive it can be.

More obviously distinctive, of course, is rye. I've never much liked bread in which rye dominates, preferring its bite in very small quantities. In tasting bourbons that feature a high proportion of rye, I discovered why I've so often been disappointed by rye whiskey. Too much rye gives a blatant, flat character that blunts the things I really want to taste—which in bourbon include vanilla and caramel, and also nutmeg, honey, orange, apricot, cinnamon, and apple.

In making bourbon the grains are cooked into a kind of hot cereal, slowly and at progressively lower temperatures as each grain goes into the vat, to avoid scorching. This is the stage at which most of the water is added. Bourbon distillers are clustered around Bardstown, about an hour south of Louisville, because of its exceptional limestone water—high in calcium and free of iron, which can spoil flavor. Jack Daniel and George Dickel—another, less well-known but greatly admired maker of sour-mash whiskey—also started and stay where they are, within a short distance of each other, for the water. The Jack Daniel distillery, situated in a dry county, sells bottled water instead of bourbon at its shop, with the familiar black label. The water is sweet, round and soft in the mouth, and, truth be told, pretty bland. For its part, Maker's Mark insists on buying only corn and wheat that have been raised in fields above the same watershed that provides the water for its bourbon.

Once the "sweet slurry" is cooked, it is combined with a quantity of sour mash from previous batches—the starter—and yeast, and the mash is left to develop in open wooden vats for three to five days. On the Jack Daniel tour visitors are encouraged to dip a finger into a vat; I was surprised at how few people did. After two or three days the porridge was tangy and slightly alcoholic—not breakfast material.

The mash then goes into a still in which the alcoholic portion of the mash is steamed off and condensed. By law bourbon must be distilled at no higher than 160 proof (out of a potential 190; proof is double the percentage of alcohol by volume), but most bourbon makers distill at between 125 and 145. Because most bourbon is sold at somewhere between 80 and 100 proof, they add water later to bring down the proof. Although it might be more economical for a maker to distill to a higher proof and add more water, too high a proof will result in a nearly tasteless liquid. Many makers take the extra step of putting the initial distillate, called "low wine," through a second still to refine its flavors. The resulting "high wine" is put into barrels. The spent mash is dried and sold as animal feed that is said to be exceptionally nourishing.

The barrels for bourbon must by law be new, and this may help explain why so many of the nine Kentucky distilleries choose to market much of their production simply as whiskey, not bourbon: new barrels are expensive. The white-oak barrels, again by law, are charred on the inside. This charring gives bourbon its color (no coloring can be added), and the degree of charring helps determine the robustness or delicacy of the bourbon. Color comes from the "red layer" between the charred surface and the uncharred wood (think of the color of toast before it burns). As the weather changes, the liquid goes into and out of the pores of the barrel, acquiring not only color but also the vanilla flavors of the wood. Used barrels are often sold to distillers in Scotland and Canada.

Most bourbon is aged only six or seven years. You'll never find a seventeen-year-old bourbon, as you will a Scotch. This isn't because bourbon makers are out for a quicker buck, although of course tying up stock also ties up money. It's because the Kentucky weather is much hotter than that in Scotland or Ireland or Canada. The temperature on the top floor of a storage warehouse, called a rack house, can reach 125° on a hot summer's day. This intense heat gives Kentucky and Tennessee whiskeys much of their characteristic flavor. Aging

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for too long, though, would draw too many tannins and other unpleasant-tasting substances out of the wood. Because the temperature on different levels of the rack house can vary so much—on the same day that it is 125° on the top floor, it can be 70° on the bottom floor—most distillers blend many barrels from various levels before bottling. Maker's Mark follows the logical practice of rotating the barrels—a step too expensive for most others to take, requiring as it does both labor and keeping some racks empty. The smell of even the cool bottom floor of a rack house at Jack Daniel is overpowering.

THE many cryptic pieces of information on a label touch on matters of debate—for instance, the effect on taste of the final proof. Some maintain that a certain bourbon will simply taste better at a certain proof, whether that is 85 or 101. Bill Samuels, for example, who began bottling Maker's Mark in the late 1950s, decided that his bourbon was best at 90 proof. Others, like Booker Noe, the grandson of Jim Beam himself, think that bourbon is best at "barrel proof," meaning with no water added—in the case of Booker's, a new bourbon named for Noe, anywhere from 121 to 127 proof. (Wild Turkey Rare Breed is also barrel proof.) Liquor of such a high proof need not be filtered, as other bourbons are in order to prevent possible clouding. As with wine, the less filtering, the more flavor comes through.

Nearly every bottle of bourbon comprises liquor taken from many barrels. Only the premium bourbons from the Leestown distillery, including Blanton's, Rock Hill, and Hancock's Reserve, are actually "single-barrel" bourbons. Even if the other premium bourbons come from multiple barrels, though, they are not "blended," a term indicating that neutral (that is, cheap and flavorless) spirits have been added. All the new bourbons, then, are "straight," meaning unblended.

Are they small-batch? Maybe or maybe not, given the lack of agreement on what that is. Maker's Mark claims that the term has traditionally meant bourbons bottled from mixtures made up of no more than 1,000 gallons, and that rival distillers draw from bigger batches. Others say that there is no precise definition. It doesn't much matter. The new bourbons involve great care in the making, and it shows in the sipping.

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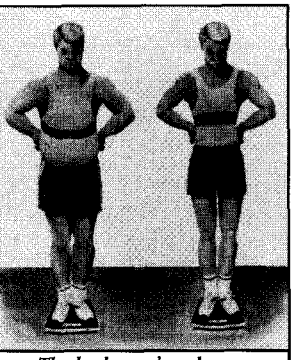

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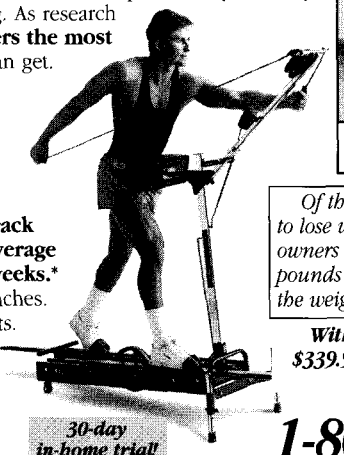

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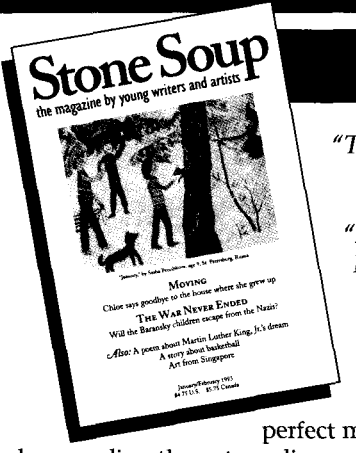

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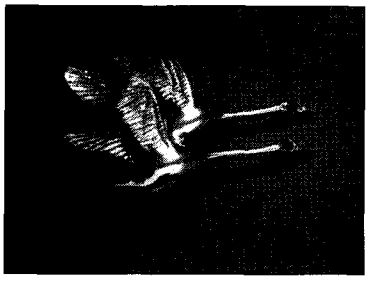

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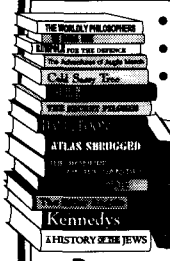

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A GREAT all-purpose bourbon is Maker's Mark, which costs only about $15 a bottle. The company brags of the smoothness that results from the high proportion of wheat used and the absence of rye, but the sweet elegance is usefully counterbalanced, I think, by a roughness that gives the bourbon real character without making it in the least harsh.

The Jim Beam company has taken the marketing lead in releasing four small-batch bourbons with great-looking labels. One of the labels, that of Basil Hayden's (this bourbon is by far the least interesting of the four, perhaps because it contains a lot of rye), looks like a Quaker cassock and has a metal belt with a "bH" insignia where the buckle would be. My favorite is Baker's (107 proof), for its strong vanilla and spice flavors and lingering smooth finish. I think it's delicious. Knob Creek, which recently tied with a new Maker's Mark limited-release bourbon for "National Champion Whiskey" in a tasting conducted by *Wine Enthusiast* magazine, has a less sunny range of flavors, including caramel and orange, and a peppery bite. I don't like it nearly as much.

Booker's, the fourth bourbon, is a whole different drink—as big as the man himself, who is huge, and talks in nonstop folkisms. The aroma is spicy and powerful, and the high proof means that the liquor is scorching—it more or less must be diluted with water, which brings out the full range of flavors in almost any bourbon. Even diluted, Booker's is as rough-hewn and potent as any whiskey. The finish, though, is unexpectedly refined, like a smooth jet landing. Booker's probably shouldn't be the only bourbon you stock, but you shouldn't deny yourself a taste of it either. (The bourbon, which costs $45 a bottle, came in a close third in the *Wine Enthusiast* competition.) Happily, Jim Beam sells a tasting assortment of the four, in miniature bottles niftily packaged in a wooden crate, for $20.

The most impressive premium bourbon I tasted was Rock Hill, which comes in a pompous square bottle with gold horses painted on it, as if it has to look expensive (the suggested price is $40). What's inside is a revelation—fantastically smooth, sweet with the flavors of vanilla and caramel, and as perfect for sipping as any Scotch could ever be. So satiny is Rock Hill that it demands no water, and goes down with amazing ease; at 100 proof, that could be dangerous.

PERHAPS inspired by the name, I wanted to cook with Baker's as soon as I tasted it (like Baker's chocolate, though, it's named for a person). Elizabeth Alston, the author of an excellent series of small baking books, includes a fine Tennessee-whiskey pound cake (you can use bourbon) in her new *Simply Cakes*. This calls for just the right amount of complementary nutmeg; don't overbake it, and, as with all pound cakes, let it rest a day before serving. My favorite whiskey recipe comes from a monumental new collection, *Classic Home Desserts*, from the always reliable writer Richard Sax. This has the right recipe for just about any dessert you'd actually like to make in your kitchen. It includes a charming recipe, which I made with success, for "Tennessee old maid's sweet potato pudding," distinguished by its grated raw potatoes rather than chunked cooked ones; the liquor is in the spiked whipped cream. Sax even includes a recipe for cookies with whiskey- or bourbon-soaked candied fruit: a palatable alternative to the dreaded fruitcake, and one that needn't be started months in advance.

In a few months, when the weather gets warmer, it will be time for juleps (the word comes from the Persian for "rosewater"). At Booker Noe's house, where his wife, Annis, served me the southern lunch of my dreams, I admired the squat sterling julep beakers above the sideboard. Noe gave me his recipe for the perfect mint julep. The first secret is the syrup: boil two cups of water and two cups of sugar for five minutes, and when the liquid is cool, add two cups of spearmint leaves, no stems; allow the syrup to steep, covered and refrigerated, for two days. Fill a six-ounce cup flush to the top with crushed ice "so damned hard a cat can't scratch it." None of that soft ice, Noe admonishes. Drizzle two tablespoons of syrup over the ice and "give it time to run down." Then add an ounce and a half of bourbon, and plunge a straw down to the bottom of the cup. The next secret is patience, which will bring its own reward: don't start drinking for at least five minutes. "As you sip that julep, it'll get so much better," Noe promises. "You'll see what I'm saying."

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Lustily Vigilant

Nobody else has written about movies with such dash as Pauline Kael, and nobody else has seen movies with such a depth of perspective

by Roy Blount Jr.

FOR KEEPS: THIRTY YEARS AT THE MOVIES

by Pauline Kael. Dutton, 1,312 pages, $34.95.

AFTER Pauline Kael was featured in *People* some years ago, a friend who had read the article called her and said, "Where's 'Ochi Chyorniye'?" That is the folk song the music boxes play in Ernst Lubitsch's lilting romantic comedy *The Shop Around the Corner*. What was missing from the article, the friend was suggesting, was Pauline's tune—or Kael's, I should say here, so as not to sound too familiar, although she has been one of my best friends for nearly twenty years. Maybe I can hum a few bars.

Nothing too lilting. She spent a recent massage session (it's therapeutic, for her Parkinson's—she is determined not to tremble like Katharine Hepburn) lying prone and listening to piped-in classical composers and marveling, "How did they get *away* with some of that crap?" As a moppet in northern California, she cut short her own violin-prodigy career by getting up before a synagogue audience, whose expressions of fond expectancy rubbed her the wrong way, and swinging into "Onward Christian Soldiers." If you are among those readers whose favorite movies Kael has ripped the underbellies out of, you might see that performance as an early sign that the key to her is perversity. No, I'd say it's D-sharp, for Dionysian acuity. No, not acute Dionysianism. True, she led off her review of one of her favorite movies, *Nashville*, by calling it an orgy. But just try to slip something really dirty past her,

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—DANA GIOIA
Washington Post

"A beautiful and richly instructive book,

a worthy and welcome sequel to Eileen Simpson's *Poets in Their Youth*."

—LOUIS AUCHINCLOSS

Just published by Knopf

as she thought the director of *A Clockwork Orange* did.

> When I pass a newsstand and see the saintly, bearded, intellectual Kubrick on the cover of *Saturday Review*, I wonder: Do people notice things like the way Kubrick cuts to the rival teenage gang just so we can have the pleasure of watching that gang strip the struggling girl they mean to rape? . . . That girl is stripped for our benefit; it's the purest exploitation. . . .
>
> How can people go on talking about the dazzling brilliance of movies and not notice that the directors are sucking up to the thugs in the audience?

Generally vigilance is defensive, but Kael has had no theory or system, aesthetic or political, to defend. She has been *lustily* vigilant. She no longer reviews movies, because, at seventy-five and in frail health, she doesn't feel up to the physical effort. She stepped up to all comers (within reason) with her heart on her sleeve and her mind working overtime. No wonder she took it so personally when movies stank, or when they inspired "goofy rapture," or when they were just not quite all that one might have wished: "And so the ironies in *The Man Who Would Be King* go by fast—when we want them to vibrate a little." This helps to account for the enormous resentment she stirred in many readers, who may have felt that she wouldn't let them pick up a movie's vibes for themselves: it was as if she were telling them how they were turned on by a lover, or why they shouldn't have been. But it also helps to account for why her reviews are still great reading, and not just as personal essays but as inspired and hearty attempts to evoke upon the page a movie's "Ochi Chyorniye."

KAEL'S latest book, *For Keeps: Thirty Years at the Movies*, is professedly her last—her own selection from a three-million-word corpus of criticism and reporting. She retired from regular reviewing for *The New Yorker* three years ago, and for several years before that she was casting a cold eye on her own powers, like a great athlete who wanted to be the first to detect the slowing of her reflexes. "I don't jump out of bed every morning eager to work anymore," she told me when her writing was still full of vigor, "and I don't remember every detail of the movies I see."

"Pauline," I said, "I've been that way since I was fourteen." I told her I had finally caught up to one of her favorite entertainments, the 1940 *Thief of Bagdad*. "Oh, good," she said, and asked me about a minuscule bit of business she wasn't sure she remembered correctly from seeing the film when it came out. I had seen it the night before, and I didn't even remember the *scene*.

In the late 1960s and the 1970s her schmoozy yet magisterial *aperçus* inspired widespread emulation among the young. Now college kids tend not to have heard of her. Nearly all of Kael's thirteen books are still in print in England, but in this country most of what is available is *For Keeps*.

It's more than 1,300 pages long, and more than 600,000 words: "a brick," as she puts it. Bullion, I would say, to use a word that not only means "gold in mass" but also derives from an old verb meaning "to bubble, to boil." In the interests of full disclosure, I should say that back in the seventies Kael talked a couple of movie studios into giving me my only two screenwriting gigs, and the $50,000 or so I realized carried me through an otherwise hardscrabble period as a freelance writer. The purely financial benefit of knowing her has probably not been entirely offset by the looks of horror that influential Hollywood figures gave me in succeeding years when I told them she was one of my heroes, so perhaps I should recuse myself from writing about her book and her.

But knowing a person she is reviewing has never inhibited Kael. Some years ago I gave her and another woman, who was meeting her for the first time, a ride from New York City to western Massachusetts, where Kael and I are neighbors. Kael remarked regretfully that her review of *Stardust Memories* had caused Woody Allen to end their friendship.

"What a shame," the woman said, "that he took it so personally."

"Oh, no," Kael said. "It *was* vicious."

Merciless, anyway, in its assault on a widely cherished yet repellent film. Kael has always had a particular taste for (as in Brian De Palma) "the dirty fun of a bad boy." Allen was the darling of New York taste-setters for having gone beyond such fun to a higher-toned mixture of introspection, sentiment, and satire. Kael picked up on not only what *Stardust*

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Going Down the Drain

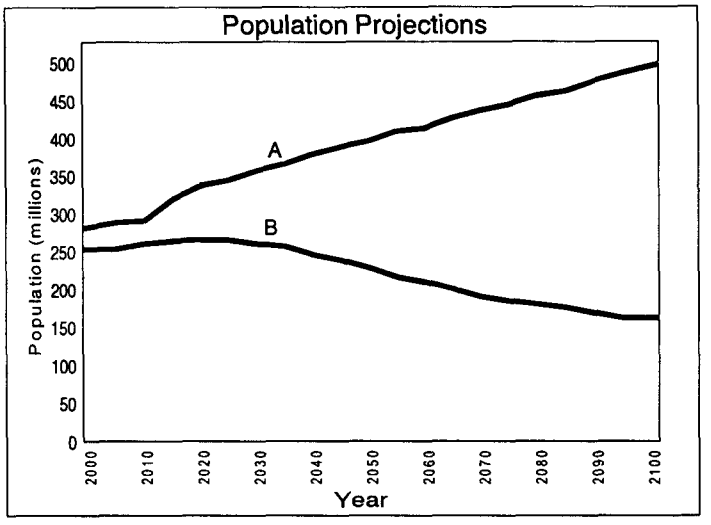
That headline may not be scholarly, and the tone is perhaps too flippant for a deadly serious matter. Still, it would be hard to find a more apt description of where our country is heading as a direct result of the relentless growth of our population.

The arguments for first halting, then reversing, U.S. population growth would seem so compelling as to raise the question "Why isn't it being done?".

Line A shows where our population is headed with current levels of fertility and immigration— to nearly 400 million by 2050, and to nearly a half billion by the end of the next century!

Such population growth would surely lead to disaster for future generations of Americans. It would have profound impacts upon the environment, on renewable resources like farmland, forests and water, and on our society itself.

A smaller population would help the nation deal with the social, environmental and resource problems that confront us, yet very few of our politicians and pundits even consider the idea.



On the assumption that they are held back by unwarranted fears, we will try to explain briefly by what relatively gentle adjustments we could turn U.S. population growth around.

Line B shows what could be achieved with the "two child family" and with immigration reduced to the levels that prevailed for much of this century.

If parents indeed "stop at two" it would lead to a total fertility rate (TFR) of about 1.5 children, because not all women have children, and some have only one. A national TFR of 1.5 would make possible a gradual turnaround in the population growth that drives our social and environmental problems.

We Need to Reduce Immigration

But the two child family alone will not enable the nation to reach a smaller population size. It would need to be accompanied by a substantial reduction in current levels of immigration.

In 1900 we were a nation of less than 76 million. Almost half of the population increase since then has been post-1900 immigrants and their descendants. The Census Bureau projects that our present population of some 260 million will increase by 2050 to 392 million (middle projection), or even to 522 million (high projection).

Of the population growth anticipated for the 21st century, nearly 90 percent will be post-2000 immigrants and their descendants. In other words, immigration is the driving force behind a disastrous surge of population growth.

The average annual level of recorded gross immigration from 1924 through the 1960s was 198,000. Immigration is now over a million per year. If we were willing to bring net immigration down to 200,000 a year, our demographic future would improve dramatically.

If we moved now to the "two child family" and concurrently brought immigration under control at an annual level of 200,000, it would lead in the next century to the population projection shown in the graph *(Line B)*.

By the middle of the next century parents could even be encouraged to have more children, for a total fertility rate of 1.9. That rate would allow our nation to maintain a constant population size of around 150 million.

If, at the same time, we change our lifestyles to reduce unnecessary consumption, and use energy and materials far more efficiently, such a population size should be sustainable for the very long term.

The Choice Is Ours

We need to choose the path leading to a sustainable U.S. population of around 150 million. To get there we would need the combination of the two child family and a moderate net immigration of 200,000 a year. What would be so difficult about that?

We need, above all, the courage to make now the decisions that would safeguard our demographic future. We urge Third World nations to bite the bullet and face up to their demographic problems. How about doing it ourselves?

by Donald Mann, President

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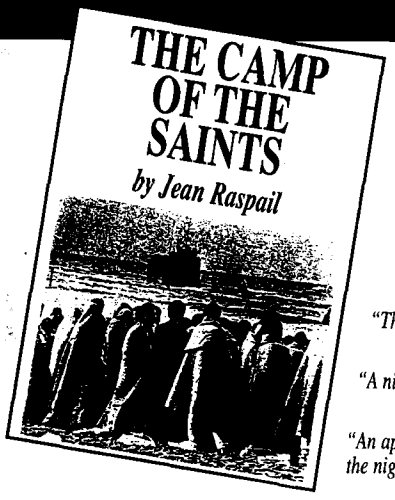

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"Seasonality"

Circled letters can be rearranged to give THANKS. *Across.* 1. A-DORE (anag. + *a*) 5. MAC(RAM)E 11. LA(PIDAR)Y (*rapid* anag.) 12. EDOM (rev.) 13. (W)ANT 14. SEMIPRO (anag.) 15. SKIE(R)S 16. I-TA-LIAN (rev.) 17. S(A-UT)EED 18. A(CUT)-EST (*set* anag.) 25. PO(WE'RE)D 28. SI(MILA)R (*mail* anag.) 31. A(ME-BA)'S 32. FLAC-ON (rev.) 33. R-EL-IN-KS 34. IN-K 35. SW-EDIS-H (*side* rev.) 36. PORTUGUE(S)E (*s* + anag.) 37. E(NIG)MAS (rev.) 38. NISAN (hidden) *Down.* 1. A-L(ASK)-A 2. GERM-A-N 3. OPT(I)-MUM 4. EDERLE (anag.) 6. JAP(AN)ES-E 7. CYPRUS (homophone) 8. A-DOZE(n) 9. MO(LIE)RE 10. E-M(BE)DS 14. SEAT-O 19. C(RIME)AN 20. RUSSIAN (anag.) 21. MES(A)S 22. SPAN-IS-H 23. SWAHIL-I (anag. + *i*) 24. SL(A)LOM (rev. + *a*) 26. WELK-IN 27. ESP-ERANTO (*a tenor* anag.) 29. FRENCH (hidden peripherally) 30. HONDA (anag.)

Memories was curdled by but what it was all about: Allen's slide into self-hatred, sentimentality, and disdain for his audience. Now that accepted opinion deplores Allen as a self-absorbed, dysfunctional stepfather, Kael's review of *Stardust Memories*, reprinted in *For Keeps*, resonates like a perfect-pitch blow of the whistle. The semi-autobiographical character Allen plays, she wrote in 1980,

> is superior to all those who talk about his work; if they like his comedies, it's for freakish reasons, and he shows them up as poseurs and phonies, and if they don't like his serious work, it's because they're too stupid to understand it. He anticipates almost anything that you might say about *Stardust Memories* and ridicules you for it.

To such a challenge Kael was bound to rise. While she was at it, she gave Allen's earlier work its due: he "helped to make people feel more relaxed about how they looked and . . . about their sexual terrors and everything else that made them anxious." But if there is anything that Kael can't abide (besides trendy propaganda), it is contempt mixed with bogus romanticizing.

> *Manhattan* was also full of naughty, self-centered types: he contrasted their lack of faith with the trusting, understanding heart of a loyal child—played by Mariel Hemingway. (What man in his forties but Woody Allen could pass off a predilection for teen-agers as a quest for true values?)

Neither this assessment nor Allen's personal reaction to it meant that Kael had turned her back on his work. She praised several of his movies after *Stardust Memories*, and after she quit reviewing, she urged all her friends to see his post-scandal comedy *Manhattan Murder Mystery*. If she had *never* liked his work, she would never have been friendly with him. Tell Kael that you enjoyed a movie that she thought was, as she might put it, *not . . . very . . . good*, and she will say "Oh" in a certain tone and look at you—whoever you are, even if you are, say, me—as if you'd said you'd gotten a kick out of Goebbels's speech the other night. Some people find this absolutism off-putting—well, everybody does. She can say things that make you feel that the room has been flushed with acid. But she's an affable, cheery person to meet. She was quite cor-

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dial to one of my son's friends whom I took to meet her one night at dinner. This young man, a big fan of hers, confided that *The Man Who Came to Dinner* was his favorite movie. "Oh," she said. "See it again. It won't be."

Filmmakers sometimes arranged early screenings for Kael and called to ask her what she thought. She was the most eloquent appreciator in print of Richard Pryor's best work, but when he called to ask her opinion of his dispiriting autobiographical *JoJo Dancer, Your Life Is Calling* before its release, she gave it to him straight: it was hopeless. In her heyday several tables in the downstairs rooms of her big turreted shingle house in Great Barrington, which she and her daughter, Gina, restored from a shambles in 1970 (she made the down payment on it with what *The New Yorker* paid her for running her *Citizen Kane Book* in installments), were always covered with neatly stacked book manuscripts, screenplay drafts, and unplaced articles sent to her by friends, acquaintances, and strangers asking for private opinions. She devoted an enormous amount of time to this reading, and to energetic encouragement and discouragement.

She is the least guilt-inducing woman I have ever known. Once when I was giving her a ride to the country, a big rain came up and flooded the Saw Mill River Parkway. I took an ill-considered detour through a great accumulation of water—don't worry, I told her, I got this figured—and the car conked out. There I was, in a rickety Plymouth Horizon bumper-deep in the middle of rushing water that must have been 200 yards across, with a physically delicate, environmentally hypersensitive (bugbites swell her up disastrously), sixty-odd-year-old woman who was the most acerbic critic in America; to boot, I didn't know exactly where we were, except probably in the state of New York. It was getting dark. The water was rising. I have had a loving mother and several eminently-capable-of-wading sweethearts who would have given me deserved grief at that point. Kael's demeanor was perfectly sunny. I would have carried her to Massachusetts on my shoulders if necessary, but as it happened, I got the car cranked and we rooster-tailed out of there.

She slipped on ice and broke her nose trying to get to my one-man show off-Broadway, and because I knew she had

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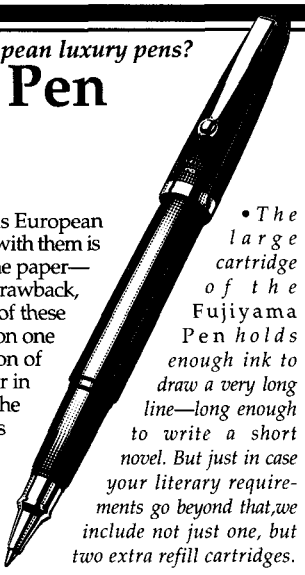

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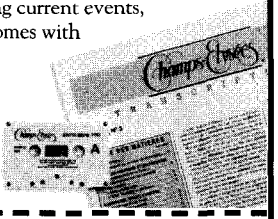

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trouble getting around in the city (also because I wasn't sure I knew what I was doing onstage), I hadn't even asked her to come. When I heard about her injury, from someone else, she pooh-poohed my concern. "We've never let each other down," she told me once. I don't think anybody else has ever actually told me that.

SHE doesn't talk about her past much, but I can tell you a few things you probably don't know about her. For instance, in the finals of a California high school debate competition one year in the mid-thirties, Kael's opponent was Carol Channing. Perhaps this is one of those supernal matchups you would prefer to speculate about endlessly (Who would win, Captain Marvel or King Kong? Mother Courage or Auntie Mame?), but I am constrained to report that according to Kael, Carol Channing was very bright and her *team* came in first, but Kael prevailed in the one-on-one.

Here's a poser: Who would win, Kael or Dr. Johnson? She has bestridden film criticism as colossally as he in his day bestrode letters, and neither of them—in print or in person—left room for disagreement. Johnson was acknowledged as a giant. The *Kirkus* review of *For Keeps* fell in with many of Kael's past critics by calling her intelligence "quirky" and averring that she "thought quite highly of herself and her judgment." Kael would be the last person in the world to plead from gender, but I asked her recently, "Would your reception be different if you were a man?"

"Yes," she said.

Maybe even if she were taller. Her physical tininess should have no more to do with her "Ochi Chyorniye" than Johnson's hulkingness with his, but, she says in her introduction to *For Keeps*, "I think that the disjunction between my strong voice as a writer and my five-foot frame somehow got to people. . . . people who don't like my writing find it both Olympian and smart-alecky. I guess at some level it *is*."

She was the youngest of five kids, growing up on a farm in Petaluma. Her brothers used to throw her back and forth between them like a ball, to her delight. The animals chased her. As a child, she was regarded as such an inspired comedian that her parents thought she might be the next Fanny Brice. Before she got into movie reviewing she wrote plays that were produced for radio but never for the stage. "Back then, no one produced anything unless it had jugglers in it." She once had a husband (she had a few, but this is about all I know of her marital history) who, believe it or not, made her feel that she couldn't do anything right, the way Katharine Hepburn's fiancé does in *Pat and Mike*. Once, in a hardware store in Great Barrington, a salesman who did not know her pointed to a sign saying FATHER'S DAY SPECIAL and said, "That goes for you, too, Mom." Kael's response was, "Fuck you, too, Charlie."

She is almost certainly the only *New Yorker* writer who ever said to William Shawn, that magazine's late, sainted, editor, "Oh, come off it, Bill," dragged him downstairs, and made him play the piano at an office party. She used to make Shawn turn bright red in the face (more from apoplexy than embarrassment) by insisting on keeping explicit sexual references in her copy. Shawn was himself a connoisseur of bawdy humor, but he was as obsessed with keeping smut out of his magazine as Joe McCarthy was with getting Communists out of the government. (Once, he turned down a piece of mine that entailed a man and a woman getting Super Glued together, quite nonsexually, in a dry-cleaning establishment, because he worried about how they would go to the bathroom.)

I have always felt that Renata Adler attacked Kael so hysterically in *The New York Review of Books* in 1980 because Adler, a paragon of *New Yorker* tone, resented Kael's having managed to keep her own voice. Other women writers at *The New Yorker*, Kael claimed, would cry in order to get their way with Shawn. Kael had the nerve to ask Shawn to rewrite his introduction to her *5001 Nights at the Movies* because she found the first version to be "overflorid." And he did.

After all, she had occasionally consented to make alterations for Shawn. Once, she showed me proofs of her forthcoming review of *Reds*. Warren Beatty, she had written, played John Reed as "p____y-w_____d." That's the way it had been set in type, presumably because even the compositor was horrified. Shawn had adjured her to come up with some other term. She couldn't understand why. It was the right word, she insisted.

"Jesus, Pauline," I said. "You can't say 'pussy-whipped' in *The New Yorker*!" (You couldn't then.) "How about 'uxorious'?" She rolled her eyes. Eventually she gave in to Shawn on that one, and recast the sentence, but I still feel proud of her for trying. Let me think how to put this: the two most startling and refreshing moments of my intellectual life as a semi-apostate male Georgia Methodist émigré were when I realized that Kael really *didn't* see why she could not use in *The New Yorker* a down-home adjective that I would hesitate to use in conversation among close female friends, and when she observed during a very brief biblical discussion in my car one afternoon that the New Testament was "a bit sticky."

In *For Keeps* she has not included her review of *Reds*. It was largely negative, partly because she found it trendily old-Hollywood leftist. I attended the special screening of *Reds* that was held for her. This was not long after she had returned to reviewing after being lured by Beatty out to Hollywood to become, at fifty-nine, a producer-consultant at Paramount.

During this period Kael felt, to my astonishment, that I could write a movie, and arranged a development deal for me. She didn't intervene in the writing of the script, although she got it Xeroxed for me, because I couldn't afford to at the time. She liked it. Paramount didn't. Though she received no screen credits during her five months in the business, she says she helped get several movies into production, including *The Elephant Man*. Kael returned to Great Barrington and *The New Yorker* no more compromised by having worked for Paramount than Orwell was by fighting in the Spanish civil war.

I would like to be able to report that her discernible reactions at the *Reds* screening were somehow revealing. But it was usually hard to tell how Kael had responded to a movie until she started talking about it, some minutes after it was over. Sometimes I would feel impelled to state my reaction before she had a chance to. I remember that as soon as the credits for Jonathan Demme's *Something Wild* had finished rolling, I turned to her and said, "Now, I *liked* that!" "You did, huh?" she said in a steely sort of way. For a minute I thought she hadn't liked it, but I think it was just that she was still tasting it. She came away from *Reds* looking the same way she looked leaving other movies that disappointed her: let down.

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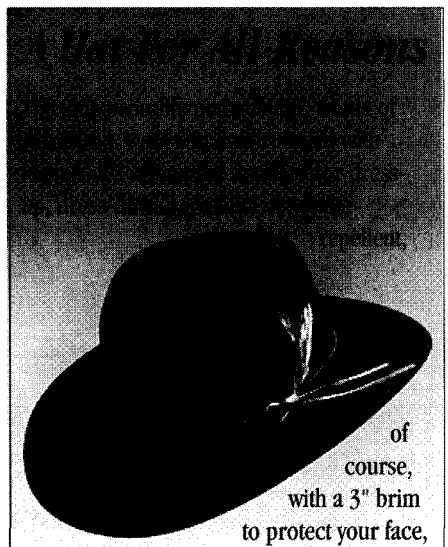
I DON'T know how to suggest that the general reader take *For Keeps* into his or her life. I know that *5001 Nights at the Movies* richly accompanies my own watching of old movies on television. Many people with whom I have argued about Kael have said, "Okay, she's a good writer. But her opinions about movies . . ." Are perverse. Or quirky. No, they aren't. Try watching *Love in the Afternoon*, with Gary Cooper and Audrey Hepburn. The newspaper listings or your standard movie-on-TV guide will probably pronounce it a classic. But if you are like me, when you watch it you think, Jeez, this is a maundering old guy somehow assumed to be attractive to this beautiful gamine. So you pick up *5001 Nights* and you read, "Gary Cooper, looking as if he knows how unappealing he is in the role . . ."

I also recommend taking *5001 Nights* along with you to the video store. Wonder whether *Voyage Surprise*, by the Prévert brothers, is worth taking home? Could be, if only to satisfy your curiosity over Kael's note: "With Martine Carol, and the dwarf Pierre Piéral, who's like a miniature Bette Davis." Tempted to check out *Summer and Smoke*? Maybe not after reading

> There's supposed to be something on fire inside Alma, Tennessee Williams' lonely, inhibited preacher's daughter, but from Geraldine Page's performance and Peter Glenville's direction 'tain't smoke that rises—just wispy little old tired ideas goin' to rejoin the Holy Ghost.

For Keeps is not such a handy reference. It's one of the thickest one-volume compendiums (two and eleven-sixteenths inches) of anybody's work I've seen. It's shaped like something you might want to pull off the shelf and read aloud from with the whole family gathered around, but you'd need to have a family that is receptive, all together, to sentiments like "a little nose-thumbing isn't enough . . . we want the subversive gesture carried to the domain of discovery." The publisher talked her out of calling it *The Bedside Pauline Kael*, but bed is a good place for it—I have myself more than once drifted off to dreamland savoring a passage like (on Vanessa Redgrave) "she can be majestic more fluidly than anyone else (and there's more of her to uncoil)."



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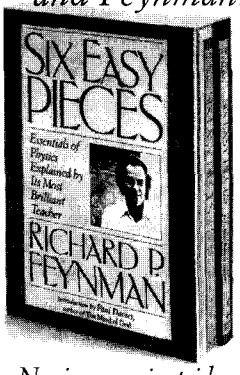

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Reading *For Keeps* also provides an opportunity to argue with Kael without her being there. It's no fun to disagree with Kael about a movie. It's like arguing with an umpire. She has made her call. Trying to talk to her about what might be wrong with her opinion of a movie is no more rewarding than it would be to talk to the director about what might be wrong with the movie after it's out; she doesn't seem to have second thoughts. Of course, who does have much interest in going into what's wrong with what he or she has already done? It's not surprising that directors break off their dialogue with Kael after she has disparaged their work. Paul Schrader remained her friend after she wrote, about his *Hardcore*, "For Schrader to call himself a whore would be vanity: he doesn't know how to turn a trick." But then, their friendship dates back to well before he became a director.

When I told Kael, some years ago, that I didn't like Robert Altman's *Nashville* (which she called, among other things, "the funniest epic vision of America ever to reach the screen"), she was content to reply that southerners of her acquaintance tended to have such a reaction. Well, damn right. But it wasn't just that *Nashville* seemed to me culpably ignorant of Nashville and country music. (Kael in fact has been good on several other movies involving southern culture.) I'm an Altman rooter, but—no doubt partly because Kael's ecstatic review had so raised my expectations—*Nashville* struck me as slack, overblown, and full of stragglers (for instance, Jeff Goldblum driving up portentously on a motorcycle at odd moments). And the songs! Whoever got the idea that Hollywood actors could write their own, bad or good, country songs? Rereading her review, I still keep saying, "*What?*" It *bothers* me that I am so unmoved by a movie about which she wrote, "You don't get drunk on images, you're not overpowered—you get elated. I've never before seen a movie I loved in quite this way: I sat there smiling at the screen, in complete happiness."

It is also hard for me to see why she loved *Last Tango in Paris* quite so much. This and *Nashville* were her two most over-the-top enthusiasms. She reviewed both of them well ahead of their general release, and she found both of them to be enormous advances in movie consciousness. Well, when your drinking buddy or

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your favorite teacher introduces you to the person he or she has fallen head over heels for and you can't see the attraction, maybe you're jealous. Maybe you had to be there, at the advance screening. I wasn't present when *Last Tango* was shown for the first time, at the New York Film Festival on the night of October 14, 1972—a night Kael compared, in her review, to the night *Le Sacre du Printemps* was first performed. If I had been, maybe I, too, would have been "in a state of shock," or I could have talked Kael out of it. (Ha!) When I did hie myself to a theater, expecting to see something that "altered the face of an art form," I was impressed by Maria Schneider's nakedness, but as a figure of graphic lust she was no Georgina Spelvin. "She carries the whole history of movie passion in her long legs and baby face"? I didn't find Marlon Brando's grunting possession of her to be so drastically erotic. Call me old-fashioned, but I found him more pansexual when, as in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, he kept his pants on.

I think Kael reserves her highest admiration for movies that get the better of her, or at least push her to the limits of her acumen. She *wants* to lose it at the movies, for movies to be good enough for that to happen. It's a seemly desire, rare in an exacting critic. In another review she wrote, "*The Moment of Truth* raises emotions that neither its moviemaking team nor we can fully comprehend, and so the material draws us in and stays with us." Of *Tango* she wrote, "It's like seeing pieces of your life, and so, of course, you can't resolve your feelings about it—our feelings about life are never resolved. Besides, the biology that is the basis of the 'tango' remains." She got that right.

People have often accused her of reacting against popular views. In her earliest writings, to be sure, she devoted a good deal of energy to disparaging the opinions of other critics. But once she got established herself, she overlooked conventional wisdom. Check out her review of *The Color Purple*. Other reviewers charged Steven Spielberg with taking a modern African-American classic and turning it into a cartoon. Kael ignores the assumption of *classic* and transcends the shorthand of *cartoon*. She doesn't debunk the notion that Alice Walker is a great writer; she just alludes in passing to Walker's "rampant female chauvinism," takes note of the novel's "joyous emotional swing," and, after accusing Spielberg of approaching this "'serious'" project with timidity, allows that

> the Walker material has about as much to do with character studies as Disney's *Song of the South* did. . . . The people on the screen are like characters operated by Frank Oz. But they're not much phonier than the people in the book: Spielberg's problem is that he can't give the material the emotional push of that earthy folk style of Walker's. He just doesn't have the conviction that she has. . . .
>
> He sees Georgia in 1909 the way a European director might; visually the picture suggests *Song of the South* remade by Visconti.

Nobody else could have written that—not because nobody else has written about movies with such dash but because nobody else has seen movies so disabusedly, with such a depth of perspective. No one is likely to read *For Keeps* straight through. I dipped around in it, thinking not so much "What great writing" as "What an interesting movie that was."

MUCH has been averred about Kael's prose style, but most of it has been reductive. Here, from her review of *Diva*, is a quick snatch of prose that might seem quintessential: "The unfazable Alba is the post-Godardian tootsie—in her short-short skirts and transparent plastic coat, she's a lollipop wrapped in cellophane." To those who think that her use of words like "sleazo" and "klutzburger" is what typifies her style, "post-Godardian tootsie" may seem emblematic. And hey—it's sharp and it fits, both the character and the film. But it's just a snippet. What impresses me, as a person who labors to say what he means in magazines, is the jam-packed fluidity of such passages as these, which deal with, respectively, Marilyn Monroe, Steven Spielberg, and Brian De Palma:

> Her mixture of wide-eyed wonder and cuddly drugged sexiness seemed to get to just about every male; she turned on even homosexual men. And women couldn't take her seriously enough to be indignant; she was funny and impulsive in a way that made people feel protective. She was a little knocked out; her face looked as if, when nobody was paying attention to her, it would go utterly slack—as if she died between wolf calls.

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Nobody cuts faster on shots full of activity than he does, yet it's never just for the sake of variety: it's what the movie is about that generates the images and the cutting pattern, and there's a constant pickup in excitement from shot to shot—a ziggety forward motion.

In the Metropolitan sequence (the interiors are actually the Philadelphia Museum of Art), we catch glimpses of figures slipping in and out at the edges of the frame, and there are other almost subliminal images; we're playing hide-and-seek along with Kate, and her pickup. Later, there's a visually layered police-station sequence: the principal characters—Mike; Dr. Elliott; Kate's whiz-kid son, Peter (Keith Gordon); a loud, brash investigator, Detective Marino (Dennis Franz); and a pretty, investment-minded hooker, Liz Blake (Nancy Allen)—are in different rooms or in the hallway, but they can see each other through the glass partitions, and the interplay among these people, most of whom have never met before, seems to be happening on about eighteen different levels of deception, eavesdropping, and all-around peeping. . . .

Dressed to Kill isn't as imaginatively dark as *The Fury*; the evil was luxuriant in that one—nightshade in bloom. There's nothing here to match the floating, poetic horror of the slowed-down sequence in which Amy Irving and Carrie Snodgrass are running to freedom: it's as if each of them and each of the other people on the street were in a different time frame, and Carrie Snodgrass's face is full of happiness just as she's flung over the hood of a car.

I can't tell you how pleased I am by that writing. (That *punctuation*. When she was still living in the Bay Area, she says, a rumor got around that she had done away with herself, because someone found an anonymous suicide note on the Golden Gate Bridge "that displayed my use of the colon.") It resists being focused upon as fine writing—the last sentence is an unselfconsciously seamless joining of, say, Elizabeth Bowen and James M. Cain. Nobody cuts faster on shots full of activity than Kael does, yet it's never just for the sake of variety. It's what the prose is about that generates the images and the cutting pattern, and there's a constant pickup in excitement from sentence to sentence—a ziggety forward motion.

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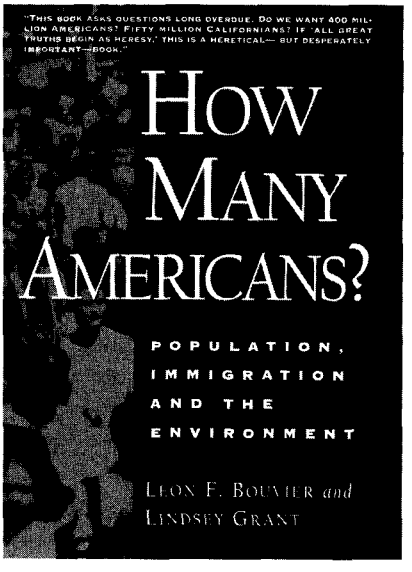

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Now that Gaza and part of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") have been turned over to the Palestinians, the clamor for peace with Syria becomes ever more strident.It is understood that in order to attain such peace, it will be necessary for Israel to return the Golan Heights to Syria.

What are the facts?

Historical Background—The Golan was always part of the Jewish homeland. The Syrian claim to the Golan is tenuous. Syria, as a political entity, did not exist at all until after the first World War.

Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Syrians subjected the villages in northern Israel to almost daily shellings, making normal life impossible. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria attacked Israel and was defeated. Israel occupied the Golan Heights and in 1981, for all practical purposes annexed the area.

Syria and its President—Syria is the most destabilizing influence in the Middle East. It is classified by the U.S. State Department as a narcotic-dealing and terrorist state. Its main fury is directed at Israel, which is perceived as a bulwark of Western influence and civilization, both of which Syria totally rejects.

Syria's President, Hafez Assad, is a tyrant, every bit as cunning as his Iraqi counterpart, Saddam Hussein. Under Assad, Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that Assad was the mastermind in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans died, and in the explosion of PanAm flight #103 in which 270 people lost their lives. He oversees one of the largest narcotics operations in the world.

Military Security—The Golan is about 10 miles wide, with a plateau on either side of a crest. If it were part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of a supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to maintain a state of readiness and mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural terrain bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points are defensible and made possible the repulse of the 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syrian hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any military movements, thousands of tanks—backed up by missiles and airplanes—could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small breathing space for mobilization.

> "With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

The current Israeli government, in its keen desire to bring peace to its people, after almost fifty years of war and bloodshed, would seem prepared to give up the limited strategic security it now enjoys by virtue of its possession of the high ground—the ridges of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and of the Golan Heights. But Israel should not return to the "death trap" borders of 1967 or anything close to it. In order to survive within such borders, Israel would have to rely on the goodwill of the Arab states, all of which—except for the cold peace with Egypt—are still in a declared state of war with Israel. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat, and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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Now I want to talk about rape. If there is anyone who is above (or below—whichever is superior) political correctness, it is Kael. ("Women's-lib sensitivity may be the worst blow to drama since fifties-TV Freud.") I have heard her express the opinion that the woman on whose story the movie *The Accused* is based should have had more sense than to vamp drunkenly in a poolroom full of buttheads. Here is what she wrote about *Hud*, in 1964:

> I suppose we're all supposed to react on cue to movie rape (or as is usually the case, attempted rape): rape, like a cattle massacre, is a box-office value. No doubt in *Hud* we're really supposed to believe that Alma is, as Stanley Kauffmann says, "driven off by [Hud's] vicious physical assault." But in terms of the modernity of the settings and the characters, as well as the age of the protagonists (they're at least in their middle thirties), it was more probable that Alma left the ranch because a frustrated rape is just too sordid and embarrassing for all concerned—for the drunken Hud who forced himself upon her, for her for defending herself so titanically, for young Lon the innocent who "saved" her. Alma obviously wants to go to bed with Hud, but she has been rejecting his propositions because she doesn't want to be just another casual dame to him; she wants to be treated differently from the others. If Lon hadn't rushed to protect his idealized view of her, chances are that the next morning Hud would have felt guilty and repentant, and Alma would have been grateful to him for having used the violence necessary to break down her resistance, thus proving that she *was* different. They might have been celebrating ritual rapes annually on their anniversaries.
>
> Rape is a strong word when a man knows that a woman wants him but won't accept him unless he commits himself emotionally. Alma's mixture of provocative camaraderie plus reservations invites "rape."

Okay, now read this from Kael's review of De Palma's *Casualties of War*, in 1989. Her paean to this movie has often been cited as evidence that her judgment had grown erratic: how could a director long fascinated by violence against women do justice to such a serious matter as GI rapists in Vietnam? But *Casualties of*

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War is the one genuinely hard-to-swallow Vietnam movie.

> The men climb high above the valleys and set up a temporary command post in an abandoned hut in the mountains; it's here that the sobbing, sniffling girl is brutalized. (Thereafter, she's referred to as "the whore" or "the bitch.") . . .
>
> And, whatever the soldiers say or do, there's the spectre of the dazed, battered girl ranting in an accusatory singsong. The movie is haunted by Oanh long before she's dead. The rapists think they've killed her, but she rises; in our minds, she rises again and again.

There is no stance in either of these passages. There is genuine feeling and receptivity. There is a roundness within which ambivalence pulses and so does violation. I admire Kael for how much she "hated" (a word not used lightly) Alan Parker's despicable *Mississippi Burning*, and for how much she relished Jonathan Demme's at-that-point-unrecognized *Citizens Band*. I tip my hat to her for hailing Jessica Lange (in *King Kong*, which as a whole I did not treasure as much as she did) and Morgan Freeman well in advance of other critics, and for calmly outflanking Lillian Hellman *and* Diana Trilling *and* Mary McCarthy *and* Jane Fonda *and* Dashiell Hammett *and* whoever "Julia" may have been in her review of *Julia*, and for taking ungushy but resounding pleasure in Rip Torn and Bette Midler and Cary Grant and Marguerite Duras and Sam Peckinpah (whose movies, after all, *are* far more lively than those of Howard Hawks and John Ford and other testosteronic directors whom the auteurists accuse her of slighting) and Barbra Streisand and Robert Mitchum ("this great bullfrog with the puffy eyes and the gut that becomes an honorary chest") and *The Stunt Man* and (insufficient vibration aside) *The Man Who Would Be King*.

But I suggest that when contemporary dusts have settled and people are reading what was written about movies in our time, what will be most salient about what Kael has written will not be that she was slangy or that she put many people off but that she watched movies so well that she was able to help us to see rape, for instance, steady and see it whole.

BRIEF REVIEWS

The Father

by Alfred Habegger. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 550 pages, $35.00.

If he had not fathered Henry the novelist and William the philosopher, Henry James senior would probably be no more than a semi-forgotten member of the large group of unorthodox theorists who agitated nineteenth-century minds. Mr. Habegger's biography proves that the man rewards personal attention. Son of a self-made financial and political bigwig in Albany, Henry lost a leg in his teens, drank his way through Union College—which in those days granted a degree to anyone who paid his bills and made an occasional appearance in a classroom—and in a spasm of high-mindedness elected to follow his brother William into the ministry, entering Princeton Theological Seminary. Princeton was a stronghold of rigid Presbyterian doctrine and that did not last long, but the high-mindedness did. Henry spent the rest of his life collecting, partly assimilating, amalgamating, and publicly expounding liberal social and religious ideas. Swedenborgianism, utopianism, free love, socialism, transcendentalism, primitive Christianity—he wrote and lectured on all of them, undistracted, thanks to his inheritance, by the need to earn money. He attracted considerable interest but never a

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following, probably because would-be followers drawn to one book found much of its content repudiated in the next one. In detailing James's career, his biographer has created a thoroughly interesting, wide-reaching study of the whirlwind of ideas that confronted intelligent people in the mid-nineteenth century. The book is well worth reading, and although Henry James senior may have been, basically, an inconsistent thinker with an exceptional gift of palaver, he had his points. A man who despised Bronson Alcott cannot be casually dismissed.

A Year in the Maine Woods

by Bernd Heinrich. Addison-Wesley/William Patrick, 259 pages, $22.00.

Mr. Heinrich is a professor of zoology at the University of Vermont and the author of *Ravens in Winter.* His latest book is an account of a full year in a cabin among trees, birds, insects, and animals, all of which he observed with endless enthusiasm. The charm of Mr. Heinrich's writing lies partly in his ability to describe weather and wildlife and partly in the curiosity that impels him to discover that red squirrels harvest maple syrup. The book is also a window on the past for anyone interested in such matters as how much wood is required to heat an ill-caulked cabin and how to conserve water by putting the well a long way from the house.

Lost Moon

by Jim Lovell and Jeffrey Kluger. Houghton Mifflin, 378 pages, $22.95.

The mission of *Apollo 13*, launched in 1970, was to orbit the moon, performing a previously untried maneuver en route; make a landing in a rough and untouched area; and return with the usual collection of rocks. Moon landings had become routine, but there was nothing routine about the voyage of *Apollo 13*. Jim Lovell, in command of the three-man expedition, eventually found himself trying to control an out-of-balance, "powered-down spacecraft" with a "useless instrument panel" and dependent on an air supply jury-rigged with tape and cardboard, while Mission Control in Houston scrambled for schemes to correct the ship's problems. Mr. Lovell and Mr. Kluger, a journalist

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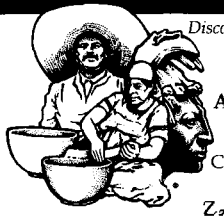

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and a contributing editor of *Discover*, have described the flight in the style of a science-fiction novel, shifting from the disabled *Apollo* to Houston to NASA's financial diplomacy to the various companies responsible for the construction of the ship to the tight-knit astronaut community to the barbarous conduct of the media, which, not content with official information, asked permission to set up a broadcasting rig on the Lovells' front lawn. The book's construction works very well indeed, both as immediately observed history and as a tale of adventure to chill a reader's spine.

African Warriors

by Thomasin Magor. Abrams, 256 pages, $60.00.

Ms. Magor spent six years studying and photographing the Samburu, cattle-keeping nomads who inhabit a remote and difficult corner of northern Kenya. Her text describes a highly mannered, formal, rigidly hierarchical society that efficiently maintains survival in distinctly inhospitable terrain. Her photographs show the beautiful young people of that society, the men in particular adorned with paint, beads, feathers, and elaborate coiffures. The author fears that civilization will submerge the Samburu and their delightful finery, and photographs of the community elders support that fear, revealing two shirts and at least three European hats. Viewers can be grateful for the grace and elegance that Ms. Magor has recorded.

Borderliners

by Peter Høeg, translated by Barbara Haveland. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 277 pages, $22.00.

Mr. Høeg's novel, which ultimately develops into meditations on lineal versus circular time and routine as an illusion of control, is more practically concerned with the miseries of three young people who have fallen into the well-intentioned but ice-cold clutches of the Danish orphanage system. Peter, the narrator, is fourteen and appears to have done nothing worse than be late for classes and run away from dismal institutions. Katarina, slightly older, asks questions. August, the youngest, is plainly psychotic. All three have been shoved into an elite school where, they realize, they should not be.

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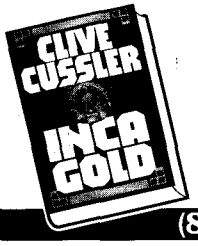

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My Life With Noël Coward

by Graham Payn with Barry Day. Applause, 320 pages, $24.95.

Mr. Payn, singer and actor, was Coward's friend and companion for thirty years and is now the administrator of the Coward estate. Mr. Day's credentials are varied but must be sound, for this collaboration is an exceptionally lively and convincing portrait of Coward as playwright, composer, director, performer, amateur painter, and indomitable perfectionist. It includes unpublished material such as numbers cut from shows, casual notes, and never-collected pieces on acting (Coward thought poorly of The Method) and critics—"I think it is so frightfully clever of them to go night after night to the theatre and know so little about it." There was great intelligence behind Coward's crackling wit, but his judgment was not infallible. The authors chronicle miscastings, inadvertent cannibalization, misdirected faith, and even Coward's belief that he could cook—a notion of which his devoted friends did not try to disabuse him. One can see why. Coward emerges here as a man who deserved love and loyalty.

Conor: A Biography of Conor Cruise O'Brien

by Donald Harman Akenson. Cornell, 590 pages, $35.00.

Conor Cruise O'Brien Anthology

edited by Donald Harman Akenson. Cornell, 370 pages, $39.95.

Conor Cruise O'Brien has been a contributor to *The Atlantic* for more than three decades. A portion of the *Anthology* first appeared in this magazine.

--by Phoebe-Lou Adams

The Atlantic Monthly INDEX

A comprehensive index of *The Atlantic Monthly*, covering January, 1980, through July, 1994, is now available. For a copy please send a check or money order for $10, payable to *The Atlantic Monthly.*

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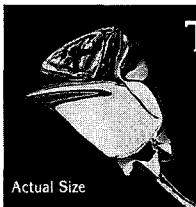

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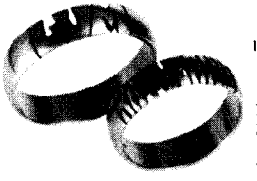

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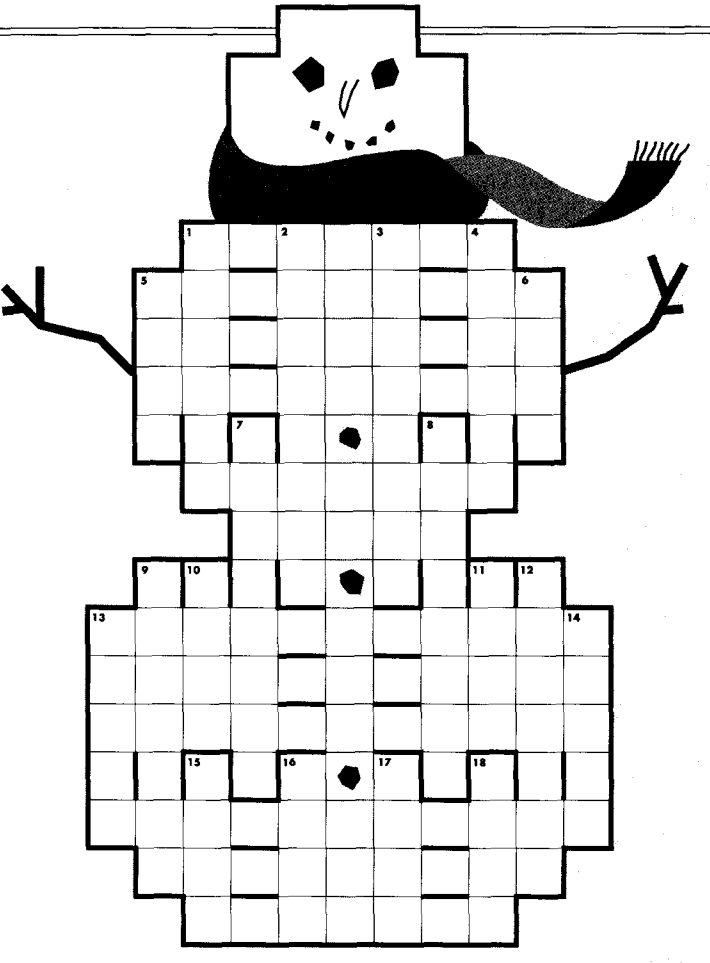
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Snow Job

The twelve Across rows with no heavy vertical bars are fully occupied, one letter per square, by one or two entries apiece. Across clues are given in rows (labeled **a**–**l** for convenience), but the rows are listed out of order. When a row contains two entries, the leftmost entry's clue is given first. In keeping with the slippery theme, each row has one letter that slides out of place and into the shaded central column. The letters ending up in that column will form an appropriately frosty phrase. Downs are normal. Clue answers include nine proper nouns.



See page 144 for Puzzler contest details.
The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 134.

Across

a. Learn by shifting "Snow Job" words?
b. Run behind small hill
Filmmaker captures island bear
c. People outside criticize treatment
d. Celebrity from casino town won, discarding heart
Herb bails out
e. In sum, eaten by troll?
f. Agree convertible is burning
Wish to do some gardening around the second of April
g. Make a movie of six-toed, unusually hairy primate
h. Walk drunkenly, with hangover?
Fight about official document for servant
i. Mention athletic shoe permit being rejected—that's oddly moving
j. City found in America, ironically
Feigning virtue after piano vanishes, promises to compensate
k. Fast month includes occupying motor lodge (*two words*)
l. I left a Spielberg movie, taking drive-in's rear entrance

Down

1. Gifted jockeys move restlessly (6)
2. Circle globe with Glen covering ding-dong? (8)
3. Charles's wife and Eric seemed confused (8)
4. Stock with great flexibility (6)
5. Farewell dinner announced (4)
6. Hillbilly saw sow (4)
7. Taking seat, whittle a Native American (8)
8. Elective, *Broadcast I*, not written in stone (8)
9. Lean left, absorbed by poster? (7)
10. Traveler's game (4)
11. Some poetry has too much about love, ultimately (4)
12. A container on each side of one enclave in Rome (7)
13. Tube with imperfections sent back (5)
14. Skier doing poorly in Kentucky (5)
15. Crowd in front of bishop's post (4)
16. Guided a Spartan queen (4)
17. Safari jackets a long way off (4)
18. Excellent punishment (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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by J. E. Lighter

Way Past Cool

WHAT would you say if your head got stuck fast in the mouth of a drooling bull elephant? Say upon release, I mean. Young Bart Simpson recently pronounced the experience "*Cool!*" and millions, not just experts in abnormal developmental psychology, understood.

But why *cool* as a word of ultimate praise? And is it possible, as the title of a recent mean-streets novel, by Jess Mowry, would suggest, to go *Way Past Cool*?

Words like *cool, cold, warm*, and *hot*, which describe the feeling of still or moving air or water on the skin, or the temperature of the body itself, also reflect our inner world of feeling. A *cold heart* is abhorred. A *lukewarm* reception is unpromising, a *hot date* quite the opposite.

The modern exuberant slang senses of *cool* are rooted in the notion of emotional restraint or detachment—neither *hot* with passion nor *cold* with disdain. Shakespeare put "*cool* reason" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and "*cool* patience" in *Hamlet*. It's not clear how the word became associated with sums of money—a mere "*cool* hundred" in 1728, but "A *Cool* Million" to Nathanael West: it was probably applied originally as a "transferred epithet" (a kind of metonymy) to suggest "obtained or obtainable *coolly*, by calculation." But an overtly slang sense of *cool* didn't surface till the 1820s.

Though the *cold fish* is a disagreeably unresponsive person, the *right cool fish* was (at Eton and probably elsewhere) "one who is not particular what he says or does" ("Bernard Blackmantle," *The English Spy*, 1825). This surprising offshoot of *cool* meant "insolent; impudent; defiant or unabashed." It blossomed from *cool*'s established meaning of "calm or unruffled" (grafted from qualities —*cool* courage, *cool* insolence—onto persons and actions), and this slangy new *cool* flourished in Britain and America for the rest of the century.

Here, then, was the crux—the conversion from restraint to extravagance. The sporting lads of Eton, whose elder brothers, Wellington claimed, had vanquished Napoleon, applauded the *cool fish* among them as *dapper dogs*. And Americans' sheer feistiness guaranteed that *cool* would see plenty of use on their side of the ocean too. U.S. examples often convey admiration for unabashed, gutsy behavior.

"'That's right *cool*,' said my neighbor, fixing his keen eyes upon me" (C. F. Briggs, *The Adventures of Harry Franco*, 1839).

"'Now that was pretty *cool* all around,' said the Colonel" (C. G. Parsons, *An Inside View of Slavery*, 1852–1855).

"A huge rattlesnake crawled out, rather *cool*!" (Diary of W. M. Hilleary, Oregon, 1865).

Cool meaning "unabashed" held on longest in the South and West: freedmen and pioneers must have admired *cool* behavior toward bullies of every kind. Even today the "*cool* pose" recognized by sociologists among inner-city teens conveys a prideful intractability.

A British journal of 1918 first reported a "*cool kid*" as a shrewd fellow, though undoubtedly the phrase came from America. A "*cool kind daddy*"—shrewd and shameless—stole hearts in an old blues number, and it is said that plain unflappability gave the outfielder James Bell his nickname "*Cool* Papa" in 1922. From every positive connotation of *cool* since *Beowulf*, black English eventually blended a new sense, used by Zora Neale Hurston in 1933: superlative; nice; pleasurably exciting. By 1946 "stylish or fashionable" had been added. *Cool jazz* was in the offing for all *cool cats*. Then came *play it cool*, *blow your cool*, and *chill out*. And we have *Joe Cool*, *Kool Moe Dee*, and *Ice T*.

We're way past *cool* already: As a laudatory phrase, *cool as hell* would have troubled Dante. A Manhattan street vendor's sign promotes "*Cool As Shit* Ear Rings"; people buy them. A motivational writer recommends *coolamundo!*—so far past *cool*, you'd need the Starship *Enterprise* to get there. For the earthbound, there's still Bart Simpson's ebullient "*Coo*-ul!" with exclamatory stress and a strong schwa-glide. As Catullus said in another connection, "*Odi et amo*. . ." ("I hate it and I love it . . .").

Investigations of slang
by the editor of the
Random House Historical Dictionary
of American Slang

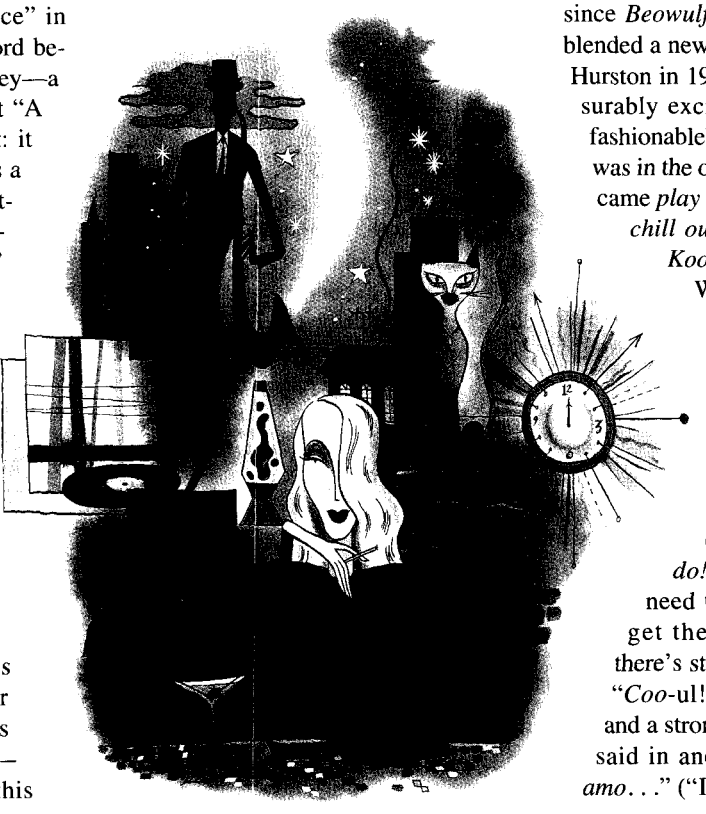

Illustration by Maurice Vellekoop

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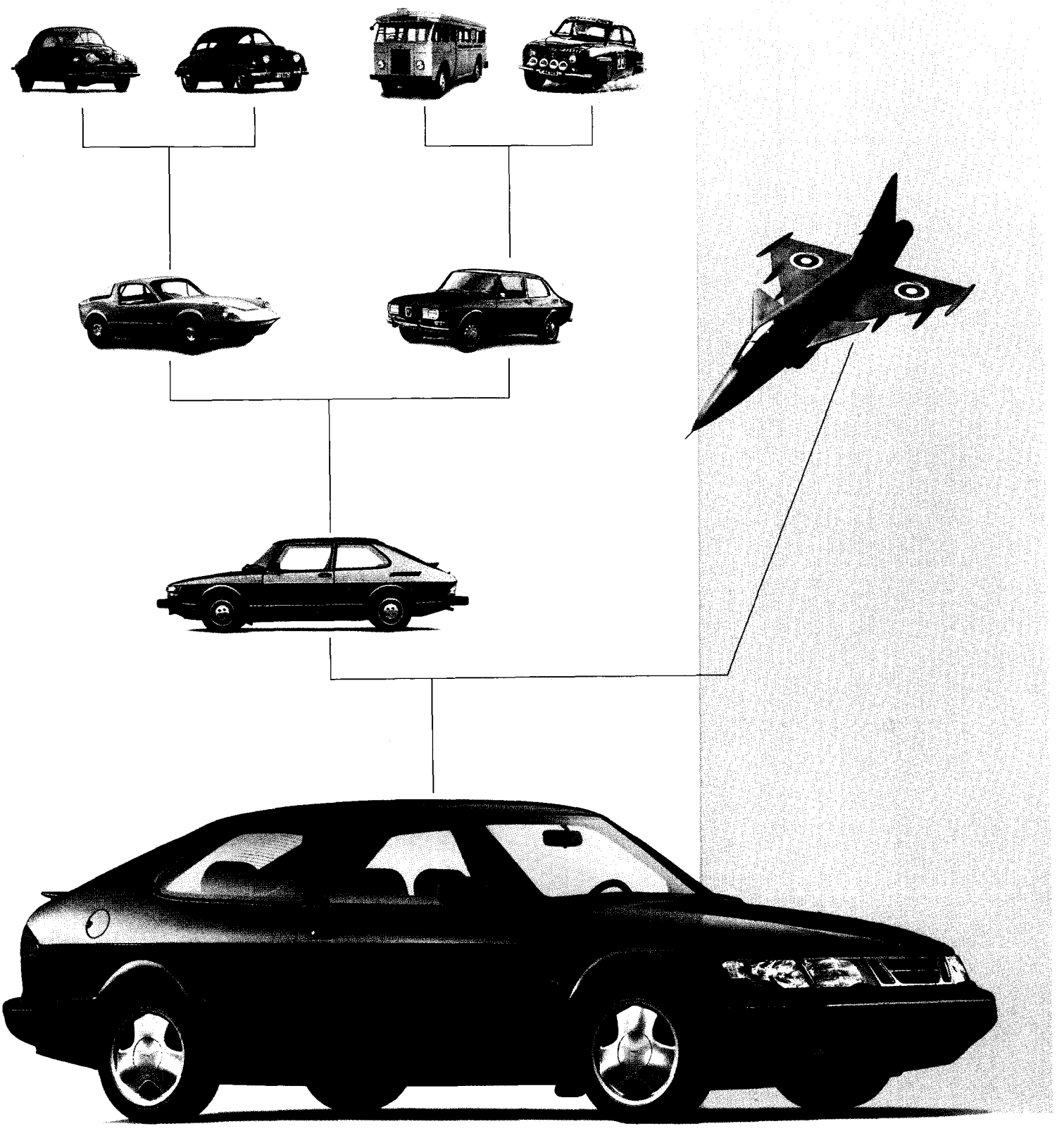

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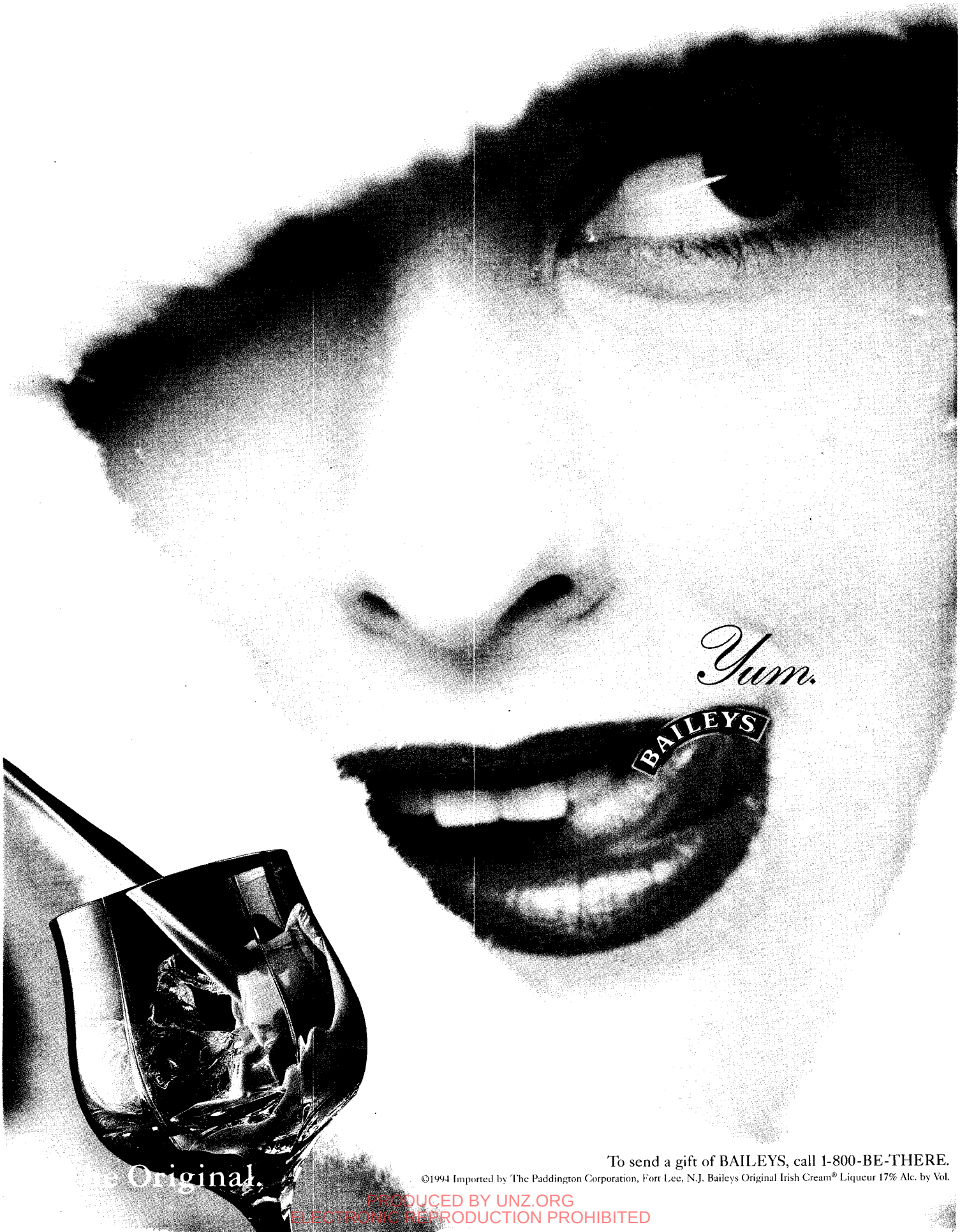

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